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A Thread of English Road

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Roads to the North

BY CHARLES S. BROOKS

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ENGLISH SPRING, 1932
AN ITALIAN WINTER, 1933
A WESTERN WIND, 1935

A Thread of English Road

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A Thread of English Road

BY

Charles S. Brooks

WITH PICTURES BY

Julia McCune Flory

New York
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PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

To W. L. F. and J. M. F.
My Companions Across the Hills of England

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A Thread of English Road

A Thread of English Road.

CHAPTER I

A THREAD OF ENGLISH ROAD

ON this thread that I spin from London roundabout to Bath I shall string the slight fortunes of a cycling trip. We must expect no high excitement. We shall not pass a gate that is not open to every tourist; nor shall we meet a single duke whom we may later hand about the hearth among our homespun neighbors and say thus he spoke and thus we answered. I cannot boast even of so much as a footpad; for the hoarse challenge of Hounslow is lost in the echoes of the past.

There is no languishing beauty to be rescued by our sentimental journey, or any raw adventure at an inn such as warmed the vagrant chapters

of the older travel books when Fielding and Smollett were alive. Mr. Pickwick met once a lady in yellow curl papers as he journeyed, but it was merely a wrong turning of the corridor and a mistake in the lifting of a latch. He entered, undressed, tied his nightcap strings against a draft and was now tucked among his happy feathers when he heard a sound. Bless my soul, he thought, Can a thief have broken in? He raised himself on his elbow and peeked between the curtains of his bed like a round moon that breaks through windy clouds. There stood a lady in his room, curling up her ringlets—a shocking view in candle light!—a lady in proper muslin, yet already fumbling with the buttons.

No such scandal, alas, will spice our present page. Tom Jones and Roderick Random both are dead. Dead is Uncle Toby and Pamela's wicked master—all the merry rogues who once traveled on the roads of England—and barmaids are sunk to a dull and faded race. I had a puncture in my tire from sharp flints in a new-laid road, but these and a skinned knee were our only mishap. Homer himself could not strum heroics on a string so dully vibrant.

From London round to Bath our days were as tame as a kitten by the fire; and my plot deals only with widespread valleys and distant towers, with windy clouds and sunlight, with upland meadows that look broadly on the world. Cattle, by

your consent, munch across a sleepy paragraph with flat insistent bells that call them forever to an endless banquet on the hills. Noisy streams brawl with shadowy invitation in a hollow by the road or in the quiet protest of deeper water they tell how needless is the dust of hurry and all the quick clamor of the world.

Hedges are in blossom in this fragrant month of May. Each branch is a spendthrift from the florist shop, each tree a huge bouquet that a bride of Brobdingnag might carry. And through all the beauty of this painted country where nature swings a reckless brush roads run here and there like restless truants and fret against the walls that keep them to their task.

Pleasant villages nest in the trees of England. Silent mill ponds trace the clouds and sky and hold their glittering canvas to the stars like students who copy in an universal gallery. Bridges echo the pageant of the centuries and water chatters its ancient gossip to the stones. Here and there I shall jot down a page of weary hills at whose breathless top some forty winks of sleep are the brief profit of a vast expenditure. And now and then I shall find a paragraph to tell of hunger that is stuffed with beef and mutton, of thirst quenched from pewter cups, of peaceful inns and the long twilight after dinner.

Cobblers and tapsters, chauffeurs, waitresses and porters—folk that grease a traveler's progress—

are the only people of our plot. Once we did see a great personage with a dizzy castle and a score of grandfathers painted in solemn oil, but we had scarcely time to remark how he dressed in common tweed when his coat tails flipped with sudden movement and disappeared to tease our memory forever.

My small pint pot, at best, is filled from another's cask. In hours of sterner diligence I may crib a fact or so from learned authors and set them down with a flourish of my own—borrowed bottles as it were, upon a boasting sideboard; in order that an unsuspicious reader shall give me credit for a vast cellarage of wisdom. But the theft will be stale and flat, for the pretense of knowledge is a weary thing and any question outside my part must reveal an emptiness.

You shall be asked to hear how bacon always was our breakfast and how we sickened of endless cabbage. Something more than a hogshead of strong tea is your portion if you keep even to the filling of my cup. Of beer a tankard now and then! I ask you to share a stomach ache gained delightfully on Devon strawberries—every berry worth its kink and cramp.

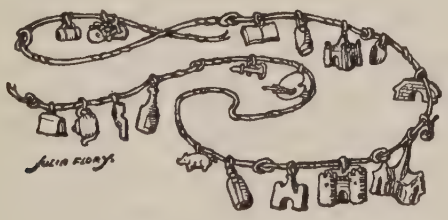
You shall learn how once we sat uncertain at a crossroad until the flip of a penny made its choice, and how we washed our linen in the bath. We shall talk with villagers to learn of their altered world—how a son was killed on the Marne,

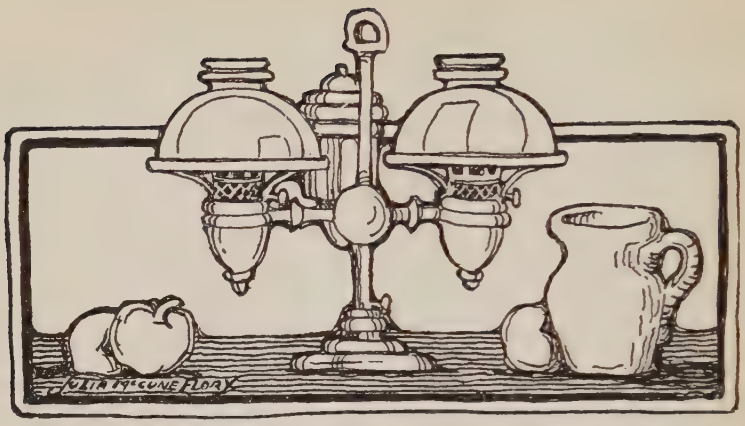
how a brother was gassed in Germany's indecent warfare, how a mortgage devoured a house and garden. It is a peep at a common tragedy. Now and then, when dinner has swelled us up, a button will pop off. A rent for patching you will have and other sad mischance. A cyclist sweats by day in the eye of Phœbus but all night he sleeps in Elysium. And this, too, lies inside my plot.

These are the things that I shall string on my thread of road—castle and tankard, platter and church—but the brightest beads will be our common remembrance of great events—far-off battles on the purple hills of fancy, books that are yellow at the edge but vivid in our lives, kings and poets who once flourished in the countryside and went on their silent journey.

If this be your appetite the cloth is laid and a great bell calls you. But if your desire is a dish of sharper pepper you had best pocket your coin and seek another board.

Let's put out the spoons and make a start before the platter cools!





Its gurgling student lamp and dish of apples.

CHAPTER II

WE SPEND A WEEK IN LONDON

WE landed at Southampton from a ship that was at once a hotel, a country club, a swimming pool, a gymnasium, a restaurant, a dance hall, a golf course, a cold-storage plant, a theater, a board walk, a palm garden, a ghetto, a machine shop, a beauty parlor and a gambling den. It was advertised, in gross compliment to the domestic magnificence of the American public, to have all the comforts of home. And I have no doubt that those of us especially with cheaper inside cabins—three hooks, a basin and a berth—were relieved of all nostalgia in its imperial salon, which was so suggestive of our own back parlor with its rosy coal hod, its gurgling student lamp and dish of apples. Palms flour-

ished in tubs of cigarette ends—an appropriate oasis for exhausted camels—and they recalled doubtless our homely lilac bush; while elevators rose from deck H, down near the furnace and the jelly cupboard. I am a poor man and I lift out my own ash barrels, but I tingle with delight to be sorted thus with kings and sugar princes.

We had touched at Cherbourg in a chatter of pleasant French, had rounded the cliffs of the Isle of Wight, and it was the middle of the afternoon when we came to dock at Southampton.

All was bustle and confusion on the pier, as Columbus was first heard quaintly to remark at Palos. We were at once herded in a pen, fattened, as it seemed, upon the voyage, for the butcher; until the stewards could throw our luggage alphabetically into heaps.

And then for a couple of hours a hundred porters bumped one another with their two-wheeled trucks and requested to know where in 'ell they were a-shovin' to. Passengers wandered nearsightedly among piles of trunks and boxes like dismal relatives who search a morgue, or sat pathetically on their assembled property to be chalked and tagged by the British Empire and the South Western Railway. Now and then a happy family was wheeled off and loaded on the train, where they piled their bags and coats with thriftless care upon the extra seats to discourage

late arrivals from breaking in and drank tea from hampers hawked along the platform.

Now and then a sniffing Pomeranian paid a usual tribute to a trunk, but his necessity was hurried by a tug upon the leash.

And yet it was rather a patient, good-natured confusion. In our own sweet land of liberty we endure more crowding and delay, and we tune the disturbance to New York's sharper manners and ill nature. We loose, also, a kennel of snarling inspectors on pilgrims returning home lest they cheat our infant industries. Thy rocks and rills, thy streams and templed hills, of thee I sing. An official in England is a public servant whose task it is to set you right and he does it politely with a touch of the hat. Our small officers, clad in a little brief authority, employ too often the manners of the stable. Nowhere in Europe is a mild citizen of good intentions so roughly handled as in New York. Nowhere is he subjected to such a dirty inquisition while his silks and linens are mauled and mussed. If our custom's wharf has any use at all in this troubled world it is merely that it gathers to its service all of our vilest creatures so that society elsewhere may be sweeter by their absence.

We came at once by steamer train to London where for a week, to strike a balance against our ship's magnificence, we lived at a small decayed hotel on Jermyn Street. It showed a painted

front with polished brass and whitened sill, but it sprawled through several ruined buildings and in the darkest part of every corridor there were steps up or down to teach one roughly a sense of humor. It had seen better days. There was always on the table at the door a letter addressed to a duchess, but the proud creature never came to claim it and I think it was a property of the house and was dusted with the furniture.

Our landlady, with a little dog always yelping under foot, led us like a swift cathartic through the entrails of her hotel and when we had made selection of our rooms she hinted that she would help us drink at our cost a bottle of wine to seal our good acquaintance.

Our sitting room was filled with enormous uncomfortable chairs of a kind that a hippopotamus might choose for his bachelor quarters. These chairs were so deeply bottomed that one's legs were not long enough to make the turn and they stuck stiffly out in front, like a child's legs on a formal visit to the parlor. They were covered with shiny glazed chintz in a pattern of large red roses whose natural perfume must have filled the nostrils of an elephant. The same unbending chintz was hung at the windows in a pleasing effect of hard linoleum.

There was a fireplace which, although it was insufficient for any warmth, did nevertheless soothe the eye like a candle within a stove.

A box held a lump or so of coal, and if one lay upon his stomach and puffed himself quite flat of wind a discouraged flame got up on its hind legs and offered feebly to do what it could to lift the chill. London seems never to catch afire and clang with engines like our American cities, but I ascribe this to the rigid caste system and anæmia of the English blaze. It is Oliver Twist, forever denied a second helping from the scuttle. It knows itself to be a hopeless under dog —a poor relation in a boarding house, a threadbare pensioner always bullied by a shrew and debarred its fling. Under this constant snubbing, pokerless, half rationed from the hod, with liver sluggish from confinement, how can it become strong and grow a fiery beard! And so it sulks on a sullen grill and dreams vainly of the days when it ran amuck and swept the city with destruction. But if fire ever gets loose again in London it will raise most particular hell among the small hotels and boarding houses where it now endures a vile contempt.

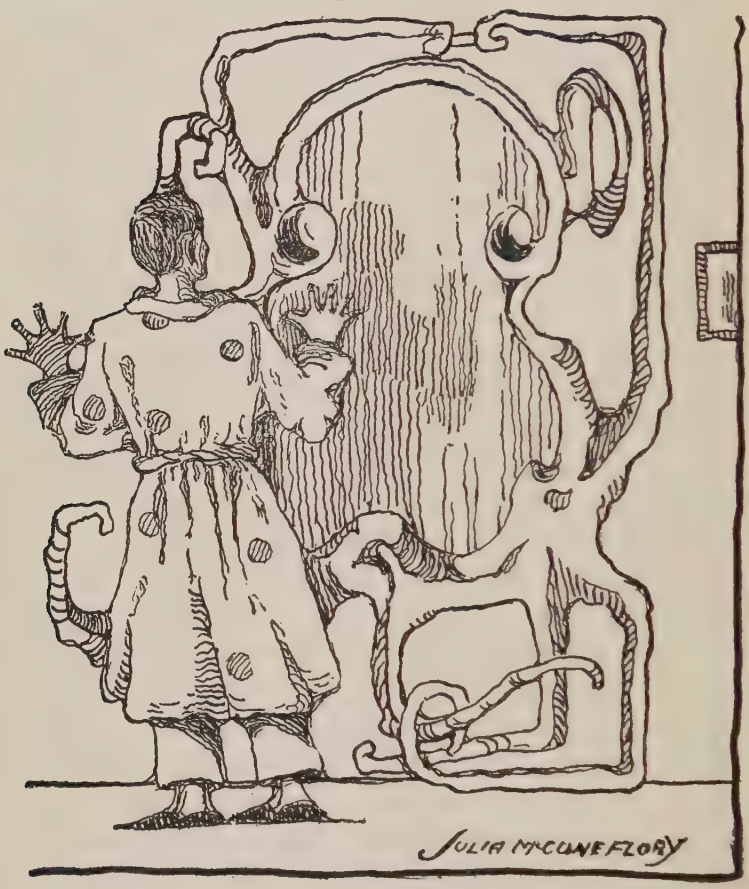
It is quite needless to say that our fireplace did not warm the room, and I have wondered why England, that is itself heated by a central furnace at the tropics and the piping of the Gulf Stream, should never have acted on nature's hint to warm its houses. It is the small fires of England, nevertheless, that have stirred its poets to give a cordial welcome to the spring, for it is a

cold damp room that brings the happy outburst of April and of May.

Our chilly rooms looked down upon a stone-paved court where there were iron benches on which no one ever sat—benches of widely spaced metal slats from which one would rise gridded like a waffle through his trousers—and upward at a clutter of walls and chimneys that seemed like a building in a nightmare and quite persuaded us that we had leaped backward for at least a century. A crazy scheme of fire escapes suggested the fearful staircase of De Quincey's Opium Eater, and my imagination sent me round and round in a dizzy fever of ascent.

In our room there were fifteen mirrors of all shapes and distortion, as if a mirror merchant had unloaded his shopworn over product; and one could find himself thin or fat as his vanity prompted him. One of these mirrors so swelled me up at breakfast that it damped my appetite. And I am amazed that no enterprising maker contrives a flattering line of corrective mirrors, in order that grosser folk may sit after dinner at their ease and see themselves proportioned to their hearts' desire. Thin folk, too, by a reversal of the lens, might be wadded out to happy dumplings. But the chiefest mirror of our room in Jermyn Street was inclosed in a huge gilt frame that threw out gaudy feelers all around to the floor and ceiling, like a devilfish that had retired from

the stormy practice of the ocean and took at last its ease in London lodgings.

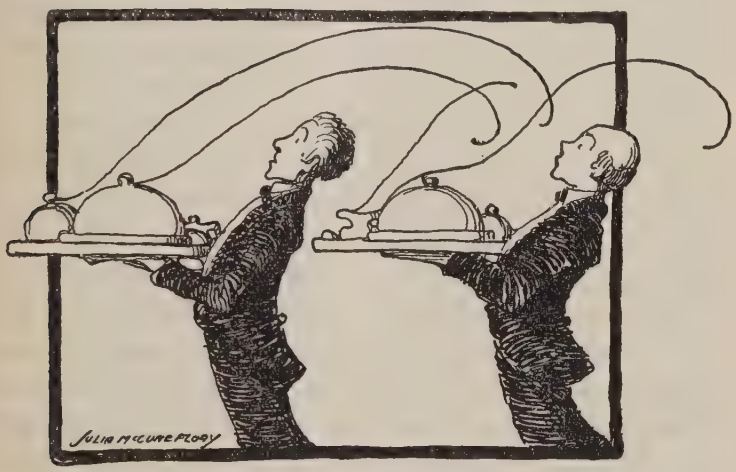


Like a devilfish that had retired from the stormy practice of the ocean.

It was a fine old house that dated from the stagecoach, but the landlady, a painted beauty often in her cups, played the piano every night

with swaggering friends, and twice in my pajamas I made an excursion to the top of the windy staircase to abate the nuisance. I could find no sufficient reason why my rest should be broken by their repeated insistence that we had no bananas.

The kitchen was somewhere at the remoter end of London and for breakfast we drank tepid tea



They made a glittering pageant along the chilly corridor.

and ate the pallid toast of yesterday. Against the chance that some genial warmth might linger this toast was set up, piece by piece, between the slats of a metal cooler. I know not the origin of the phrase that we are as warm as toast, but surely it comes not from English stock.

Our food was served by two waiters, and they made a glittering pageant along the chilly corridor with their great trays and shining covers.

These covers were purely sacramental, for nothing inside was ever hot. In England it is more than Hamlet's marriage table that is coldly furnished. We had funeral-baked meats every morning for our breakfast. A frigid scum lay always on our oatmeal until with blue milk we broke the cuticle and stirred it to a paste.

Yet we lived in style. Each morning, before the golden eye of Phœbus had alighted on the courtyard, a tall black ghost stalked in and took away our clothes—a sable biped who answered to the name of "Jeymes, it's me!" What he did with the clothes I never knew unless he roamed the ramparts with my pants across his arm. It was merely a part of some gloomy ritual of the dawn. Surely he did not press them, for they came back in their full iniquity of crease; and I fancy that for a hot crime committed in his youth the old fellow was doomed for this certain hour to walk the night. My trousers seemed to be a great comfort to his perturbed spirit, so I never failed to lay them handy.

A dear little creature with a sunny voice and chain of keys followed the chambermaid just to pat the pillows and wish us a pleasant morning. She had been with the house when county folk had been its patrons, and she mourned its fallen state. I was tempted to stow her in my laundry bag and take her to America.

Of porters we had two, not because we needed

them, but to supply a comely symmetry to our establishment.

A plush bell rope was ours and for a day or so I was deluded into thinking that it rang a bell somewhere. On my first discovery of the rope I was as pleased as a child, and I felt myself to be a character in some old English comedy who rings for lights and tea. I stood quite silent when I pulled it, vainly listening for the little jangle at the end of the wandering wire which would tell me that the cook was notified and that the pot was on the stove. The wire ran along the bewildered corridors and, plunging down the staircase like Ariadne's thread, was a guide to lead us the street.

Of the other furnishing of our apartment I shall merely add that a slithery bit of cotton lay always downside up beside our bath and was inscribed a TAM HTAЯ. The tub was a mighty quadruped on long legs, and under the whip it could have won the derby.

Above the courtyard and outside our French windows there was a flat-paved roof—the familiar leads of English fiction—where several desiccated little trees in tubs passed a thirsty life. Reform, it seemed, had struck them from America and all day they awaited their bootlegger's genial can.

But I paint the house too black, as if it were the villain of my story. It was pleasantly flavored with the past and, except for the piano and a

scarcity of bananas after midnight, I would put up there again. Our landlady, too, when warmed with champagne at another's cost, proved a friendly loquacious soul and was esteemed a character all about St. James.

From these endearing quarters each day we issued. And not to be shamed for neglect by our neighbors back at home we did the usual sights. We strolled through the Temple and read all the bronze tablets. We hung over London Bridge and rummaged through Southwark Cathedral for its tombs of Elizabethan days. We rapped at the gate of the Tower, but the dear old thing was closed and a policeman said he had orders to shoot us if we tried to force an entrance. We did, however, put our noses through an iron grille and moved them slowly from right to left; then checked the Tower as something we had seen that need never trouble us again. The wise men of the east followed but a single star. Muirhead's constellation is too numerous for an exhausted pilgrim.

We looked at Smithfield where once the fires of Mary Tudor burned. We traced the London Wall. We roamed in crowded Moorfields where Burbage set up the first theater and Shakespeare was a horse boy. We visited St. Bartholomew's church, the Cheshire Cheese where every tripper thinks ignorantly he sits in Johnson's chair, and a mile or so of the British Museum—stiffly at a

trot. We saw Westminster, of course; and Westminster School, also, under the guidance of a gentleman—silk hat and spats!—who casually picked us up in the Abbey and gave a Sunday afternoon to our instruction.

And like all pilgrims we became addicted to the bus tops. Route 96 rattled down Piccadilly and the Strand, and lost itself in Mile End Road. Route 44 struck up Southampton Row to Camden Town. And for London Bridge we found ourselves on top of 33, with a transfer at the Bank where we scurried afoot through malicious traffic; for there was no policeman to ease our crossing. On our own Fifth Avenue, at a brassy blue god's nod, I pass through the standing tide of traffic like another Moses secured by miracle; but no gesture checks the flood that boils around the Bank. In no way as well as on a bus top can one see the sights and be so aloofly and intimately a part of the London streets. Both participant and observer, he rides, as it were, on the safe shoulders of a giant and with a private elephant of gilded howdah he would sit in less magnificence.

And we took long rambles after dark with a whim to steer; on avenues of stiffest ceremony where a duke might sit at meat, whose walls were gray and void like the shutter of a lantern that hides its fire; on streets of poverty where children played within the gutter; and on pavements glittering with theaters and silk and all the traffic

of excitement. Of these walks by night there lingers best the courtyards about St. James under its ancient tower where a dim light along an alley seemed to show the pleasant specters of the past.

Then before we took to wheel we spent an afternoon at a monstrous shop on Holborn where we bought ourselves the necessary luggage.

When the waters had subsided from the earth.

CHAPTER III

A RUMMAGE OF PREPARATION

MOST persons, however doggedly upon the street at home they may point their noses on the pavement and trot to urgent business, choose nevertheless on vacation to dawdle on a street of shops and idle cheaply from window to window. One is quite persuaded that this must always have been the way of holidays since the first pilgrims to a shrine made piety an excuse for going on a journey. Babylon offered trippers beneath its wicked towers the jewels and fabrics of the east. Tarshish, we are told, showed ivory and apes and peacocks. There were money changers in the Temple of fair Jerusalem which speaks shrewdly of neighboring bargains.

Of modern cities Paris may offer the gaudiest

frippery for ladies, yet London stands clearly first in a man's desire. Shopping of any kind is here a pleasure whether one rummages cheaply for books in Charing Cross, for clothing in Bond Street or timidly for silk at Liberty's. But our own immediate purchase was luggage for our travels and this is a recreation that ranks above Westminster and the Tower. One might think that Noah had landed here when the waters had subsided from the earth and that every animal had left its hide to be tanned for a traveler's use.

I do not know that an Englishman's mileage is greater than our own, but he travels more diversely and his luggage marks the direction and climate of his wanderings. A London luggage shop holds the whiff of India and the hedgerows of neighboring Surrey. There are great leather boxes which presently will beg for a quick basin at the Horn, and tricky little bags for a week end in the Midlands. About an Englishman's luggage there is an intimacy—a flavor of possession. He does not confine himself, like an American, to a general trunk of huge impersonal dimension—a traveling closet with shelves and hangers—but he scatters his finery into a dozen little parts; and on journey he sits in a clutter of packages. These darlings, like a careful mother, he keeps always in his eye and fears to put them coldly out to nurse in the forward luggage van. There is a box for his hat, a bag for his sticks, a hamper for his lunch, a port-

manteau for his clothing, a kit for his rods and tackle and a case for his boots. Any strange unchristened bundle is doubtless a folding bathtub to be buttressed on two chairs for the morning splash. And at a change of cars he clucks like a hen.

But it was in the sports department that we lingered to find luggage to fit our bicycles. Each of us finally bought a canvas bag that packed up square and solid. It was constructed ingeniously with straps to fasten it to a metal holder above the rear wheel, and was large enough to hold a change of linen and the necessary odds and ends that make shaving and washing possible. I bought, also, a smaller bag for my handle bars to contain a camera, a guidebook and a set of maps. I did not use the camera for I could not decide how to set the shutter and the speed, and I look on it as a dog to be left asleep. Besides these things each of us bought a rubber cape. These are fitted over the handle bars and one rides with hands and arms dry inside the tent. The cape is useful, too, for a roadside nap when the ground is damp.

The bicycle is still used in England and has not gone, as with us, on the dodo's darkening path.

Americans lean on fashion like a blind beggar on a crutch. Perhaps the flexibility of caste by which our generations are forever moving up or down makes us servile to the usage of the place we seek. We anticipate our mistress's silk even

while we putter in the kitchen, and for Sunday the cheapest cat must be perfumed sweetly like a Russian sable. And once up, to hold ourselves secure, we grasp any slight convention that marks our progress. We therefore ride bicycles only as long as the thing is done—as long as its novelty catches an exclusive whim—and then throw away the habit like a shabby hat, put a mortgage on our house like all the better persons of our street, and buy a motor.

But the English, when it is convenient, still ride bicyles despite their decayed gentility in America, despite the carpenters and plumbers who ride them off to work and hang their cheese and pie upon the handle bars. They go even by motorcycle—folk undeniably in white collars. We met one old gentleman in respectable silk hat pedaling a tricycle across the country without blush or apology. Two big wheels and a ridiculous little wheel in front! A girl's tricycle that had grown whiskers and a longer leg! It is only gingerbread and lollypops that would dare ride a tricycle in America. Professor B—— at Yale used to ride a woman's bicycle to meet his class, but his thoughts moved so entirely in the eighteenth century that he may have persuaded himself he went by chair with powdered footmen. I know a famous musician, it is true, who coming lately to our city to direct a symphony, rode in the bathtub of a motorcycle for the sights, and bumped among the traffic

with his hat jammed upon his ears which stood out wing and wing to do their bit; but I have no doubt it was a drunken fling and that he remembers the outrage in his prayers.

I have found by experience that one change

If one walks in twilight.

of linen is enough for such a trip as we propose. Unless one is too proud to wash he can be his own laundress each night for five or ten minutes and hang his garments upon the bedpost or from the window and have them fresh and dry by morning. And if one walks in twilight through

the garden of his inn it is an innocent satisfaction to know which room is his by the flaunting of an undershirt or a pair of stockings at the window. They serve like a bird cage or rubber plant in the monotony of a city block to lead a tired man home. Other clothing may be packed in larger bags and expressed to the week end. And railways live under the thumb of public censure and think it their duty to make delivery.

For maps I bought rather a complete set of those made by Bartholomew, a half mile to the inch. They are so exactly printed that they show the slightest curve of road and all changes of elevation. Often they marked an alternative road that saved a hill, or by a thinner line they took us from the thicker traffic into quieter lanes. It is the byroad in England that one should choose, for its surface is as smooth as that of the larger roads and no motors disturb its peace. Nor can I imagine how our oxwheeled ancestors traveled with satisfaction without good maps to whet their appetites by the promise of a near by inn. If one knows that refreshment stands no farther off than a broad thumb his stiff muscles are revived and he comes singing to his supper. Certainly our mapless pioneers lost a delightful hour of speculation on the morrow's journey without a map to be propped at night for study against the pillow. Our American maps, however, are drawn with lax fidelity.

I am myself rather a hound for maps and I am tempted by a map shop as strongly as by a shop for books. I like them cut into little rectangles with linen backing. I know an eccentric fellow who is so susceptible to the beauty of a map or diagram that in choosing his steamer for a crossing he is persuaded more by the colored plan than by any merit of the boat, and he never selects a ship that is printed in less than three colors.

Maps, moreover, are better than picture postal cards to review the pleasures of a trip. The flat lowlands are shown in a vivid green and the hills mount by an easy grade of fading color. At an elevation of four hundred feet the map turns brown and deepens as it climbs. One of these maps is now spread out before me and as I look at its heavier brown I recall Surrey rolling at my feet, dotted with pretty villages and a touch of blue that is the ocean in the distance. And then the long flight with streaming coat tails to the lower green on winding English roads set with flowering hedges.

And let me add that he who carries a sufficient map upon his travels needs no diary to refresh his memory when his neighbors drop in to eat a plate of apples and to listen to the adventures of his journey. The engraved wiggle of the road, the blue of ocean and of stream, the cool stippling of a forest, the black dotting of the towns, recall his holiday beyond any labored page of pencil scribbling.

There is, perhaps, a smudge of dots on the Portsmouth road that is sacred to a mug of ale when he had sweated up a hill. A thin ribbon of blue in the sunny plains of Wiltshire is a runnel where he cooled his feet, and as he thumbs the map he feels again the water on his ankles. A splash of larger blue is a lake that he saw at twilight from a weary hilltop; and in the mirrored water he sees once more his village for the night, standing on its head like a jolly host to wait his coming. On the green of lower country he recalls how he lay upon his back where bluebells were the carpet of the woods. Birds hopped close in curious scrutiny and offered him a sleepy melody until the world swung around to twilight and the smoke of many suppers urged him on. Where the contour lines run thick and close upon the rugged coast of Devon he stands in memory on the dizzy cliffs to watch a white sail winking up to Bristol.

So with a map for record, no sense of duty that he must be writing needs to haunt his evenings. He may idle on a village street and seek opinion. There are silly bargains to be had across a counter —brass knockers, toasting forks and books that one will never read. He may stretch his legs at the lazy hearth and exchange without remorse a bit of gossip with the tapster, or in the garden he may count the coming of the stars. His nights are care free and are filled with expectation of the next day's run.

I did myself try for several evenings to keep notes of this present trip, but I chewed many inches of indigestible pencil till the maker's name was gnawed and gone, endeavoring vainly to remember of a Thursday what I had done upon a Monday; and three days out I gave up the ugly task. If, consequently, writing now months after the event and with only a map to guide my recollection, I set up any cathedral in a town where it does not belong or jumble the names of inn or castle, lay the mistake to an idleness on journey that was the parent of delight.

Boots and Saddles!

CHAPTER IV

BOOTS AND SADDLES!

WE made our start at Guildford in Surrey, about twenty miles southwest of London to escape the traffic and the weary pavements.

There were four of us—W——, in tweed knee breeches and leather buttons; J——, his wife, who has drawn the pictures of this book, in tweed skirt with a green feather in her hat; and John, their son, in his early passion for ginger ale and pig.

These tastes of his were first displayed to me one morning on the steamer when I followed him in to breakfast and found him sitting without his parents in a general convention of pig—sausage on one plate, ham on another and bacon on a third—all to be washed down with a quart of ginger ale. If only the parts could have been assem-

bled—as we say of motors—the perfect animal might have gone off on the hoof and left him hungry. John was ten years of age and he had read Treasure Island four times, lying on his stomach, heels waving with excitement. His reading had ranged on rough lines and it was his custom to point his thumb and finger like a pistol and cry out hoarsely "Put 'em up and make it snappy." He was addicted, also, to postage stamps, and he carried in the litter of his pockets a device for counting perforations. He wore on dress occasions a copper badge, three inches up and down, as evidence of his salesmanship in thrift stamps; and he had scooped a hole through a great red gambler's dice and wore it as a ring with five white spots showing as a seal.

We had hoped to start our cycling trip by noon, but trivial accidents delayed us. W—— had bought his tweed suit from Burberry in the Haymarket and it had been delivered the day before. But it did not fit. When he threw back his shoulders in the manner we all have of standing pretty when we try on clothes, it was apparent that the tailor had not learned his folds and dimples and that the precious leather buttons would have to be reset. So back it went on the promise that it would be returned shortly after breakfast.

We were waiting for it when a thumping announced the hotel porters—creatures who run in pairs like Noah's animals. Here they were to get

our trunks which were to be put in storage. With trusting disposition that makes me wonder how he succeeds in the shifty practice of the law, W—— shook off his city suit and packed it, thinking to sit in modest solitude and underclothing until Burberry kept his promise. But in the last hour at a London hotel one has no solitude, so W——'s best shirt was taken from him. There is a constant stream of servants anxious not to be forgotten and seeking any pretext to get in. For a while W—— tried to skulk behind the bedposts in an attitude caught from the Venus de Medici, who I think must have been surprised in a similar unguarded moment when her peplum was gone for fitting. But finally he threw modesty to the winds and in a belt and flowing shirt—wardrobe enough for Venus—he ministered to the itching palms of two porters, the housekeeper, several chambermaids, the boots, the brass-boy, two waiters, the ghostly valet and the door man. There was a female bath attendant—she who laid the daily TAM HTAB—but she was young and fainted in the passage.

It was noon when the suit came back with easy buttons. By this time W—— was so accustomed to his belted costume that he considered, for the day had now come off hot, whether he might not pedal out as Julius Cæsar and persuade the yokels that the Romans had come again. But a remnant of his modesty prevailed and we packed a taxi with ourselves and luggage and started for Waterloo.

As we passed Buckingham Palace the scarlet guard was changing with a show of pomp and our taxi clicked an idle shilling as we beheld the sight. Gingerale pointed a dangerous finger and bade the guardsman put 'em up and make it snappy, and was answered by a wink; which goes to prove that a kind heart does really beat inside a gaudy uniform. At Waterloo we had lunch among noisy folk who stuffed their stomachs for business and indigestion. Then with a shout of joy we climbed aboard the train for Guildford in the middle of the afternoon, and slipped out among the chimney pots until we found the country. It was early in May, and the trees and hedges were in splendid blossom.

There are several noteworthy buildings in Guildford—the keep of a Norman castle, St. Mary's church with a tower that is believed to be Norman, and a sixteenth century structure that now lodges a grammar school where ancient chained books are shown. I had thought the pious centuries more honest. Lewis Carroll, who wrote Alice's Adventures in Wonderland in a lucid interval among his stiff volumes of mathematics, is buried in a disused cemetery. And I would more willingly go on pilgrimage to Carroll's grave than to the tombs of many taller and heavier authors. But we were too eager to select our bicycles for any of these sights.

Guildford is a cheerful little city that scrambles

up a hill. Each house rises a foot or so above its lower neighbor, like shilling folk who sit cheaply in an upper gallery. At the foot of the high street the Wey flows to the south through an opening in the hills. To the west the Hog's Back runs to Farnham with a wide view of patchwork country, as if nature were a thrifty grandam and had saved her scraps to make a quilt against a colder month.

To the east the hills carry on through Dorking, and I am sure that the chief fame of the village lies in its having once been the home of Sam Weller's stepmother. It can hardly have escaped your memory how she and the reverend Mr. Stiggins drank hot water and rum in the bar of the Marquis o' Granby, discoursing meanwhile on pious pocket handkerchiefs to be given to the heathen (God is Love! Abide with Me! Suffer Little Children! whenever they blew their dusky south-sea noses); and how, also, at the old shrew's funeral, her good husband, Tony Weller—and you must spell it with a *wee*—doused the shepherd's flaming nose in the sizzling horse trough. I walked to Dorking once just to seek this horse trough; and to restore myself from disappointment I ate by way of lunch a long thin cucumber on a hill outside the town. The Marquis o' Granby had changed its name or else its signboard was rotted with the years.

And all this is Surrey, the snuggest, most homelike county of England. Cottages and manor

houses hide among the trees, but parish spires stand up on tiptoe as if looking for worldly persons who slight the sermons preached beneath, and make a note of it for Peter.

On this general ridge there lies a Roman way of still earlier British origin that once echoed with Cæsar's iron legions and brought the Latin tongue to England and all the culture of the east. And here, later, in the long rolling of the centuries, pilgrims trudged from Winchester to Canterbury to lay their sins on the altar of a saint. Its grass-grown ribbon still shows on the hills as if a larger plow had scarred a path, and we must fancy that among better folk the jolly wife of Bath once journeyed, whispering a merry scandal to the pardoner's ear.

Nor is the Roman way without association of our present time. It was only last night that I read in the Recollections of John Morley how he met his friend John Stuart Mill at Guildford and for a long day walked on the "ancient green road until at twilight Mill traveled to the south to pass at Avignon to that deeper darkness where silence is unbroken." Celt and Britain, Roman and Jute and Saxon, pardoner and wife of Bath, philosopher, statesman and present tripper—each of them treading on another's heels to find at last the quiet tavern that ends a dusty road.

At a shop near the top of the high street we chose our bicycles. For thirty shillings each we

were supplied with wheels new from the crate with the excelsior, as it were, like swaddling clothes still on them. And there were bells, luggage carriers, odometers, and little mirrors for the rear axle to catch the light of a motor coming up behind. Thirty shillings was the rental for four weeks. We paid in advance but were asked for no deposit to cover the value of the wheels. And if our trip ended across the country we had only to send them home carriage-paid. When this time came we wrote a letter, remarking that we had scratched the paint and would pay to make it good, but our offer was declined by this honest and generous merchant.

On each bicycle there was a tricky device by which the gearing could be shifted—low, medium or high—to adapt the pedaling to the hills. On the steep roads of southern England we found this of frequent use. The change was made by pressing the thumb against a metal finger on the handle bar. This finger beckoned your desire along a wire to the hub where the magic was performed.

It seemed to be a market day in Guildford and the street was thick with people, but none of them showed interest in our tremendous undertaking. I had expected that we would start in a hum of questions and that rustic pants and skirt would crowd about us to stare and give suggestion. Stevenson, you will recall, had the countryside to help him load his slippery donkey; and even

Christian, whom I take to have been rather a crusty person to scrape acquaintance, went off with a throng of followers. I had myself walked once for a week through Connecticut and Massachusetts and at every morning start the village dropped its tools as if a circus hoisted sail. But cycling in England is so common that we roused less attention than the tying of a shoe-string by a lady of indifferent cotton. The folk of Guildford went about their business as though the day were not marked in red, and they seemed to be wholly ignorant that the roads of England stretched from their homely doorsteps to all the excitement of the south and west.

With final counsel to one another that we must keep close against the gutter and be careful of the left-hand driving of hurried motors, we mounted and the trip began.

There is a long descending hill out of Guildford to the south, and for the first time in many years I heard the soft whir of the tire—a melody that recalled truant hours almost forgotten and a far-off thirst for ginger beer in days when a nickel was a fortune.

A display . . . . . of sugar buns.

CHAPTER V

WE LODGE WITH THE WIDOW WINTER

IT was after five o'clock when we coasted down the Guildford High Street. At the foot of the town is a pretty church. Here the great road to Winchester and Southampton branched to the west and climbed a long hill to the Hog's Back of the downs. But our course lay south to Godalming and Haslemere.

There had been a time once when, as a bicycle rider, I was not to be sneezed at. It is unlikely, dear borrower of this book, that you were ever a student at West High School in the old days when it resided on Bridge Street in a pleasant nest of candy and cooky shops. There was an old lady on the corner, I recall, who held the bulk of trade

by a display at her window of sugar buns and wedges of apple pie that stretched from ear to ear. Loosed from the Gallic wars we scampered to her shop and ate lunch in her sitting room among the easels of her charcoal relatives. Her raisin cake roused unworthy doubt and we swished above it lest a speck fly off, but her cream puffs were beyond suspicion and were so packed with custard that we leaned forward to escape the drip. It was in some such happy genesis, I am sure, that the cooky took its name—a confection so excellent as it slithered down the gullet that on it alone, of all cooked things, there was conferred the name of cooky; just as doctors of medicine have filched their title from other learning, as if pellet and pill were the total quest of knowledge.

As a bicycle rider I was not to be sneezed at.

In that far-off time not only did I win the mile-novice of the school but I was looked on as one who made a wicked finish to a road race. On one occasion I carried off as prize a leather belt. This had been designed originally for a horse but, when it proved unsalable, had been cut to smaller girth; and, still lingering in the harness shop, had been offered cheaply for the winner of the race. It was naught to wear, as it was wide and stiff and, in lieu of buckle, was tied with string; but the honor was beyond a doubt. There was a banquet on the night of the great event and all of us

broke training in the back parlor of the cooky shop on a third cream puff.

I cherish the memory of a certain racing meet near Rocky River because I stacked my bicycle with that of Leuty Johnson who was then a mighty rider. With what ecstasy I gazed at his rat-trap pedals and counted the sprockets on his wheel to learn the secret of their speed! That night I stripped my mud guard and lowered my handle bars by a good half inch to ape his fashion, for it was thought that a crooked back gave an added power. There were giants in the earth in those days. It was only lately that I passed the famous A—— B—— on the street, who about twenty-five years ago had finished the open mile neck to neck with Zimmerman, champion of America. Does no one remember Zimmerman? There was a time when all the lads of our neighborhood learned to spit like him—wishing for a broken tooth in front—and to wag their heads from side to side at the pedal stroke as if they too were champions. A—— B—— is now sunk to be a dentist—a fellow of vile and throbbing molars—but it was by an effort yesterday that I kept myself from backing off the sidewalk to make room for one who is still the chief hero in my recollection.

The Tweedledums had played a trick on me by practicing on John's bicycle in the winter months, although it was short of leg and their knees rubbed upon the handle. They had started by easy jour-

neys around the hall and dining room when John had gone to bed—a crowded traffic among chairs and tables and much lurching against the piano. Once J—— fell into the fireplace but was lifted by the tongs before she burned. And finally, under cover of the night, they rode all around the block and up what they are pleased to call a hill; and to that extent they were seasoned. But I had scarcely been astride a wheel for twenty years.

A few miles out of Guildford we passed an ancient almshouse where poor folk spend the twilight of their lives. The building was Tudor of good design and it sat as an aristocrat of slender purse among the upstart dwellings of the rich. It is a pathetic end, no doubt, and I am not sure that its plumbing is of the newest fashion. But even if the tubs be tin, destitution in the shelter of these mellow walls must lay a lighter hand on needy age than in the stifling roar of cities. And if only he might pick a jolly company of congenial taste for red-dog and checkers, any bachelor beyond the use of trowel and shovel might hope to peter out contentedly in gossip on these sunny steps. How the older ones must brag on the passing of an eightieth birthday and point in scorn their blue old fingers at any stripling of seventy who comes among them! Years are denied at forty, but are a boast when the century has run almost to its end. One decrepit fellow I saw mud-

dling in his garden, but I could think of no excuse for breaking on his company.

In churches, castles and country almshouses lie chiefly the remains of ancient England, for the

Point in scorn their blue old fingers.

other timber of the past, being of a sharper and more insistent use, is replaced by an ungracious progress and cities devour their tumbling walls in an appetite for necessary change.

At Godalming we bought chocolate and cigarettes and inquired the way in a nest of streets. On a hill above the town are the present buildings of the Charterhouse School which was removed from London about fifty years ago. This was news to me; but West High School was moved, too, and its cooky shop is gone; and I suppose that Godalming never heard of that. An archway was brought from London, stone by stone, and set up again to link the new buildings with the past.

It was at Charterhouse, as it stood once among the crowded buildings just north of Smithfield in London, that Addison and Steele met first as schoolboys. I have read recently Miss Aikin's life of Addison in the hope of finding an account of his years at Charterhouse, but she makes but a gesture with her pen, and I would be glad to exchange a tiresome year of his Irish Secretaryship for a vivid day between birch and book.

Christ's Hospital was neighbor to Charterhouse and Lamb has written two delightful papers of his schoolboy days. And his school, too, has moved to the open country south of London, where the boys still wear blue gowns and yellow stockings in the ancient custom. But Thackeray went to school at Charterhouse and in his books here and there he has hinted that he did not like it. "Remember your own young days at school," he writes in one of his Roundabout Papers, "the

tingling cheeks, burning ears, bursting heart, and passion of desperate tears, with which you looked up, after having performed some blunder, whilst the doctor held you up to public scorn before the class, and cracked his great clumsy jokes upon you—" Perhaps these savage days are gone and learning treads a softer path on the green hills above Godalming. And it was at the old Charterhouse that Colonel Newcome whispered adsum to the Master's call. "It was the word we used at school, when names were called; and lo, he, whose heart was as that of a little child, had answered to his name. . . ."

After Godalming we were committed to the south. Several miles to the east, but off behind our ears, was Box Hill where Meredith lived. There is an inn hereabout where I once ate lunch. Through a French window I looked up a wooded slope, wondering if a distant cottage might be the house where he worked his magic. It would assist a lazy sentimentalist if there were a sufficient map of England that marked these spots. But presently I exchanged my meditation for an excellent slab of beef and a bottle of bitter beer.

Near Milford which is farther to the south, we left the Portsmouth road and its motor traffic. Even in brisk times there are few motors on these country thoroughfares, and recent lean years have cut the number. The infrequent cars are commonly smaller than ours and they run on a drop

of gas. A fat man who bought by catalogue would need their measure to be sure of fitting.

At twilight we came to an inn that I had marked on my map as a place to spend the night. It was a small building, easy to the eye, in a hollow by a stream, and was called the Dog and Pheasant. Hearing the runnel I had thought how pleasantly it would sound upon our dreams. But the inn was crowded and there were boots to go under every bed. The village of Gray's Wood, it was suggested, lay two miles farther to the south and there we might find accommodation. They could, however, although the time was past, scrape together a bit of supper for us.

We ate in the smallest of parlors, filled in every cranny with odds and ends of decoration that were the cherished refuse of many generations. Chairs sagged in easy comfort as if hundreds of tired cyclists had rested here; and the cushions lapped up around one soothingly like quiet waters that hold a ship. We ate prodigious sandwiches and hunks of cheese and drank great glasses of milk. Any cow, discouraged by a peek at us, must have nibbled furiously to replace the loss. Then we lay back, crammed to the hatch, and sighed with content. Like the tired travelers of Goldsmith's play, it seemed best to spend the night on two chairs and a bolster. A thirsty company in the tap near by talked meantime of rain and crops, and drowned their conflicting prophecy in beer.

I do not know why the bugle call of bedtime is named taps, but foaming taps like this sound always in the twilight and end the English day.

At last we derricked out and trudged up the long hill toward Gray's Wood.

It was dusk when we leaned our bicycles and ourselves against the wall of the Wheat Sheaf inn. But only one room was left. The jolly days of the eighteenth century are gone, and it was not enough. Presently, however, a certain widow Winter was discovered in a cottage down the road who was possessed of an empty bouncing feather mattress. All of us went for a look at the precious sight and together we pronounced it sufficient. So Gingerale and I took the room in the inn; and he fell asleep in mid air before he struck the pillow, like a meteor that burns out before it hits the earth.

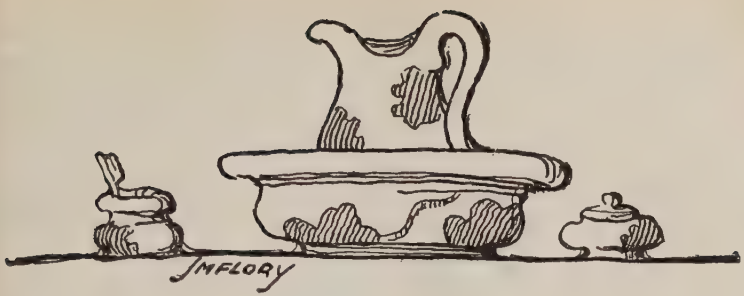
The Tweedledums buried themselves in the widow's mattress at once, but I sat for an hour on the stone step of the inn with a fellow cyclist with whom I scraped acquaintance. He was a chemist—a druggist, as we would say,—who was riding for his vacation down to Chichester on a visit to his sister. He was a little dried-up man of shriveled shank, but he had pedaled that day all the distance from Hampstead Heath in London. He was absorbed by my account of the glories and versatility of the American drug store and I warmed to the stars and stripes and did

my subject justice. He had, himself, he boasted, a great red urn of liquid in the window of his shop and a light behind to show its flaming color, but he surrendered before soda water and sandwiches, books, candy, cigars, handkerchiefs, telephone booths, writing paper, umbrellas, fountain pens, rubber sponges, bathing caps, shaving soap, safety razors, periodicals, tooth paste, cameras, base-ball scores, radio-sets, toy balloons, bed warmers and cocktail shakers. It was a shame to turn a desolating machine gun on a man with only a penny pistol.

On my telling him that our trip lay through Selborne and that we were pilgrims to the home of Gilbert White he sighed and admitted that he had never heard of him. "There are so many authors," he said, "that it is hard to know them all." This chemist was the only person I met in England who did not at once detect my American accent.

Then he left me and presently the lights of the widow Winter went out. The mattress now, with its crew aboard, was sailing off from Lethe wharf, with a dream to steer its course among the islands of the night. For a half hour I sat and smoked on the Wheat Sheaf steps and held my glowing cigarette so that the drowsy Serpent who crawled upon the heavens might see I was awake to share his lonely watch. And Altair, perhaps, looked my way across the purple spaces of the sky

and returned my winking light when I flipped the ash. The trees sighed in the dark as if they, too, were weary cyclists down from London. But in the shadows the road clambered up the hill with sturdy stride as if its intention were to reach the English Channel for its breakfast.



CHAPTER VI

THE MORNING AND EVENING ARE THE SECOND DAY

I AWOKE next morning to the song of birds and, to my surprise, found that it was still early and that I was not stiff. John's self-starter is usually out of order at the hour of rising, but I have hit on a device that brings him bounding from his bed. When I have cleared the washstand and the block is open to his traffic I merely whisper "pillow-fight", and although he has been till then apparently fast asleep he leaps up at the challenge double-armed and catches me a whack. For his reward I cower in fright and take a drubbing, and by that time he is wide awake and in humor for his soap and pebeco.

There was an appearance of somnolence at the windows of the widow Winter, as if her feathered transport of the night had not yet come to dock; so John and I went to breakfast without waiting. It was the usual bacon. Some day I shall seek a pig upon the hoof and thank him for his incessant hospitality.

The chemist was already abroad, puttering with his saddle, and presently we saw him through the window pedaling up the hill into the south. John disposed his bacon carefully about his person lest he list and sink, and then we sat in a mite of a garden at the rear where pansies fringed the walk.

The ground fell off sharply to an upland valley and rose to the wooded slopes of Hindhead. It was Surrey in the spring, with trees and hedgerows in splendid blossom and white clouds drifting briskly in a sea of blue like full-rigged ships whose captains sleep.

I suppose that I am a sentimental traveler, for it is the footprint and echo of humanity that grip me most in nature. A new world barren of recorded history, even if its glittering peaks are the columns and buttress of the sky, stirs me less than gentler hills where a long race of men has flourished. The ridges of the west, although they are the painted lodging of the sunset, are but a wall to keep us from falling in the sea, and the wide desert wastes our seed.

But where the world is checkered with fertile fields of waving grain and roads run here and there to link the friendly towns, that is a district proved. If the roofs of buildings sag with the use of centuries and their hearths are smudged in the smoke of a thousand hospitalities, if the stones of doorways are sunk and rounded with the tapping of countless feet; that is the village that

invites me. And if, also, that village speaks my native tongue so that my fancy listens to its easy

The roofs of buildings sag with the use of centuries.

tale of faded days, if its custom and habit may be traced to ours, if its long procession bears the

torch that lights our present time; that village is the dwelling of my heart. And so in humility do I confess myself.

It is not an idle sentiment that the English countryside arouses. And even when we see it first, strange and unfamiliar to our western eyes, we have a feeling that we are home at last among our kindred. Our feet are not alien to these roads, for they are paths that bore to us the ancient world and all the luggage of its culture. Each town and valley, each river, the very fields and bridges are packed with history that is our common legacy. "Witness my hand and seal! I, Time, in health of mind and disposing memory, bequeath this treasure won by thrift and diligence to you and to your heirs forever on both sides of our mighty ocean. And I lay injunction on you not to scatter its profit in stormy waste and quarrel but to bequeath it to your children and your children's children in peaceful trust for their use and pleasure so long as they shall live."

But these million folk that trod the hills are forgotten in the running of the years and only their giants are left in common record. And we, who ourselves to-day crowd the dusty paths to swift oblivion, may bow in reverence if our feet shall mingle for a moment with the tread of these greater men.

It is not folly that leads us to Cheyne Row, to the graveyard in Stoke Poges, or to that silent

church on the Avon where the elms exult in quiet melody for the mighty dead—to Abbotsford where once lived the Wizard of the North, to the Temple window where Goldsmith worked, to the empty desk on Gad's Hill. I would walk reverently in the path of Garrick and Johnson down to London, and follow with bare head the youthful Shakespeare on his first adventure out of Stratford with the world dancing in his brain. I see Massinger in the aisles of Southwark, and at Aldgate among the patter of to-day I hear the ghostly step of Chaucer. I stand at Battle Abbey and watch the iron advance of Norman William. On an island of the Thames, where pleasure craft now are moored, I see King John with the Magna Charta ready for his reluctant pen; and on the hills that are roundabout I catch the rush of Cromwell's horse. On Hampstead Heath I listen to the song of Keats and trail it to his lodging, and on the Strand a slim black-coated figure rises in my brain—Elia released from the moldy books of India House for his chambers in the Temple. To an instructed fancy, if we tag him home, a kettle sings, and cups are heated on the hob for a merry gathering of friends who will sit till morning.

All this is of English title in a larger definition that knows not an island's boundary. Memory broadcasts the past and, if one's ear be but pitched aright, the air about us roars with familiar voices.

But wise fiction is sometimes the concretest his-

tory; and there are men with ink only in their veins—creatures dropped from a brooding quill, alien to the rib of Adam—who, also, will live till doomsday. And so I follow Tom Jones on his travels, sit in his thirsty taverns and am served by the friendly granddaughters of his chance acquaintance. I trail Nancy Sikes to London Bridge when the black tide runs out at midnight, and I bend across the parapet if I may see the conspirators on the stones below. In that row of tumbled buildings a dozen ink-pot villains lived with evil traps that dropped their victims to the river. I sit with Poins among the wags of Eastcheap and with Falstaff fight a score of buckram men. I cross the journey of the Pickwick Club and see the Crescent where Mr. Winkle posted in his breezy nightshirt with Dowler at his heels, the roof where he sat with Mrs. Pott at the election.

> "Oh Pott! if you'd known
> How false she'd have grown,
> When you heard the marriage bells tinkle;
> You'd have done then, I vow,
> What you cannot help now,
> And handed her over to Winkle."

There is a rattling of Sydney Carton's tumbril in the Revolution, the roar of water as it falls across the tragic dam of Griff. These sounds, also, if we listen with ear that's tuned, race across the wireless paths of memory.

And Hindhead has its associations. It is a peaceful wooded slope but its top is called Gibbet Hill and it carries the legend of a murder some hundred and fifty years ago. You may recall that Nicholas Nickleby and his friend Smike once walked from London down to Portsmouth and that, as they rounded Hindhead, they read the fearful tablet where the villains came to grief. Later, which is more agreeable and nearer to our stomach, they met the celebrated actor, Mr. Vincent Crummles, late of Drury Lane, and shared his hot beefsteak pudding in an inn farther to the south. It was here they joined his troop and traveled behind an amazing pony who ate apple pie in a circus and went to bed in a nightcap to loud applause.

The widow Winter still gave us no encouragement that her mattress rested from its labor, so John and I climbed a hill with the inn's wagging dog. There are some brutes, half churls, who swing merely a lazy tail as if their good nature ended at the rump and left the jaw for independent action; but this friendly rascal wagged all along his spine until his ears rattled. It was a wooded hill without an open view on top, so down we came. Then I sat on a stone wall beside a meadow and wrote in my diary—My plot is a thread of English road. But there I stuck without another thought to rub against it. At least I made a title for my book. And this was my first and last attempt to keep a record of the trip.

I never finished but one diary and that was in the winter of ninety-three when I was fourteen years old. It was a record of a trip to Florida. I entered the precise minute when I arose on that exciting morning. I put down the exact time of our arrival at the station and the number of minutes that the train was late, the number of the train, of our locomotive, of our car. I timed the journey all the way to Cincinnati and entered the very minute when we passed the larger towns; and, by counting the click of the rails, I computed the speed of the train. I played a game between cows and horses, counting each and laying a bet from one pocket to another. I counted the steps from my berth to the dining car and the number of tracks in every station where we stopped.

Later, in Cincinnati, I counted the steps from one end of Coventry bridge to the other (rising at dawn in my eagerness) with an estimate of its height by dropping pebbles. I made, also, a general survey of buildings and climbed several of the tallest to learn how the number of their steps stacked up with Cleveland. I counted the chairs in every hotel dining room all the way to Florida and made an entry of this amazing information. On this trip, also, I got up an innumerable number of times and seemed always to have washed. I went to bed likewise, at the end of every day. I must have been an exact child, if nothing else.

And now, here, in the meadow of the Wheat

Sheaf Inn, let me confess to my shame that there were seven sheep grazing between wall and wall. I do not trust myself to keep a diary. It brings out the ugly bare mechanics of my nature.

On the highroad a girl in colored sweater coasted to the north. A steam beer van labored to the south. It stopped at the inn and discharged a foaming cargo, then wheezed on its errand of mercy to thirsty folk beyond the downs, to show that beer is not everywhere esteemed a dangerous juice that deserves the lockup. A bee went singing by my ear and for a moment seemed to mistake me for a buttercup. It was a pretty compliment but I slapped it off.

And now at last there is evidence that the widow's mattress has come to dock. W——'s head came to the window and, seeing me fully dressed, asked me if I were up. It was nearly noon when we took the road.

"Hills, vales, woods, netted in a silver mist,
Farms, granges, doubled up among the hills;
And cattle grazing in the watered vales,
And cottage-chimneys smoking from the woods,
And cottage-gardens smelling everywhere,
Confused with smell of orchards."

Our course now lay over the rolling country of the North Downs through Haslemere, which lies in a high hollow between Hindhead and Blackdown Hill. It was a pretty scene, but my atten-

tion fastened on a tea shop where scones and pastries were displayed. There was a house fly once on a window pane that blotted out an entire cow on a hillside; and these scones sitting close against

Where scones and pastries were displayed.

my stomach concealed the Surrey prospect. I write without complaint but of all the members of the body it is the stomach that chiefly keeps a tripper from the sights.

And so through Shottermil where my guide-book tells me that George Eliot once lived. It must

have been but a temporary home in her later days where she and George Lewes came for a season now and then. Griff in Warwickshire held her childhood and colored her writing, and Shottermill could have been nothing but a brief hotel.

We were still two miles distant from Liphook when, at an opening of a high stone wall, we saw a charming house within a garden. The roof was brown as if the years had brought it to an autumn, but flowers in their first spring nodded along the garden path. It was such a house as the Green Feather had wished to paint, so we knocked for permission with rather the mendicant air of knives-to-grind. To our surprise the owner granted our request and brought out a chair to be an easel and cushions to soften the garden path. We left the Green Feather measuring angles at the end of her pencil and cocking her head for color, and rode into Liphook for the sights.

To an American at first glance an English village is often a disappointment. He at once contrasts it to its disadvantage with the different beauty that resides in a village of Connecticut or Massachusetts or among the finger lakes of New York State—the open space, the exposed lawns, the white houses and arching trees. His eye is trained to a standard that he knows and is therefore unaccustomed to points of beauty that are foreign to him. He is slow to see with what soft caress age has laid its hand on these sagging roofs, on these tiles that are

green with moss, on a bridge that is lifted to a peak, on a wall that holds a garden captive. There is the composition of an etching in the easy clutter of roof and chimney.

Nor can he apply the scene to actual life and treat it as a commonplace, for it seems the painted canvas of the stage—a set to be folded and stored away, with another scene to follow on a change of plot when the curtain lifts again. That life travels a full routine of three dimensions beyond the flat framework of the street, that rooms and hall ways of common weekday use ramify outside the range of gallery and of pit, cannot be grasped with immediate perception. A stranger, therefore, sits at the window of such a village and considers that each person who appears at door or curb is but an actor who enters at his cue; and a homely phrase in foreign accent seems to be spoken from a player's script.

The street of an English village is narrow, often without trees and the houses are cramped against the street. It is a tight feudal baronage against the countryside and ends sharply, for the houses do not straggle up the road like tired soldiers on a march who have dropped from file. Its shops are small, as if the economy of a London street had squeezed them in. And there is, also, patent to the eye, a variance of social station that mocks our American pretense of equality. The English meet as equals before the law, but silk

and homespun do not mingle elsewhere except by condescension.

But to know an English village you must stay more than a day or two until its sounds are a customary pattern in your ears—until you know the drama that is played upon the street and your eye has learned the fashion of the houses and loves the confusion of roofs and chimneys. Enter at one of these old doorways, pass through a crazy room or two with its cold damp smell and issue on the garden. Even poverty putters among its flowers, and if it be May or June the color will be beyond description. But if the garden belongs to persons of larger fortune the turf will be smooth and perfect, and walls and trees and hedges will shield it from the world. Tea at five o'clock will be as secure and private as in an ivory tower.

Liphook is little more than a leisurely four corners of fine trees and modest buildings, with the Royal Anchor close against the road under a flowering chestnut. We had thought to turn west from Liphook and find a village for the night on the road to Selborne. But the Royal Anchor dissuaded us. We wavered agreeably in the tap among brass beer pulls that stretched their arms in welcome, then, peeping into the garden, surrendered for the night; for it was an inclosure of which dreams are made.

We were not given the room with the copper plate where once Queen Anne had spent the night

but we had rooms next door and in all likelihood this fat and imperial lady had sat in our soapy bath, which is honor enough for any dusty tourist. A faint rim of neglected suds up near the brim offered us a hope it might descend from spacious days.

A turn at the laundry! A string of glistening under-garments at the window!—where they fluttered in the breeze like an admiral's flag to show that he sleeps aboard his ship. Dinner—a chop and protean cabbage of a hundred forms! And then a quiet hour in the garden until the sun had waved farewell and the last croquet wicket had disappeared in darkness.

And so to bed, while the village still pattered on the street to end the tired drama of the day.

This cobbler was a stout Tory.

CHAPTER VII

AND NOW TO SELBORNE

I WAS up betimes and took a turn in the garden, humming a tune I am pleased to think is a part of the *Pathetique*. An old fellow in stage whiskers was giving the vegetables their breakfast, and I searched for strawberries among his pieplant until he set me right. I can put a name on most of the easy vegetables when they come housebroken on a platter, but I falter in their state of nature.

Then I sought the village cobbler and discoursed with him on the mistakes of Lloyd George while he sewed my shoe. This cobbler was a stout Tory and was persuaded that the world was going to

the bowwows. A large estate near by had recently been sold under the stress of taxes and had been broken into smaller parcels, but he stood to a firm allegiance with its former owner whose boots he had tapped since the great man's pink toes had first gone inside a sock. "Perhaps the change" I suggested, "is toward a better justice." But in hot denial he swallowed one or two wooden pegs and pished me down. I paid my sixpence and came away. At the door of the Royal Anchor I met the shining morning faces of the Tweedledums.

On this third day we leave the London highway and its vans of beer, and travel westerly on secondary roads through a district off the track of tourists. Were we to continue south we would come to Arundel where Elia's sweep—the tender novice of our first affection—was lost among the chimneys; and I mourn the castle's forfeiture.

At every crossroad is a hard decision. It is pie or pastry, but never both. Already we have rejected Leith Hill although it affords, as all guidebooks agree, the noblest prospect in southeastern England. We have seen Hindhead only from the valley. We turned regretfully from the Norman walls of Chichester. And all through the country, tucked obscurely in winding lanes, are houses of the poets that would have been worth a visit. Even place names, unattached to actual event, solicit our wanton notice. Who would not will-

ingly lose his breath on Kettlebury Hill, passed yesterday in ignorance, just for the pleasure of its tinkling syllables? Or grieve to be in Winkworth, which sounds like a village on the Lotus Eaters' sleepy shore? A lad with but an extra

The din of rival invitation.

nickel at a circus is not more perplexed in the din of rival invitation when a sword-swallower shouts against a living skeleton and his money is invited two ways at once. A melancholy essay might be written of these roads that have beckoned vainly, of the towns that have displayed their distant

towers for a brief half hour and disappeared forever beneath the hills. Some day I shall visit Arundel, if to do no more than remark how Elia's inky sweep once crept to the proud Percy's bed for rest; to speculate upon its lordly chimneys and look for a waving broom that shows a safe issue from their dusty tunnels.

At half-past nine, foddered, packed and strapped, we pedaled out of Liphook, kissed our fingers to the offer of the south and struck toward Selborne.

Presently Wolmer Forest lay on our left. The trees are gone but the name survives; for in England a mere hissing of tongue and teeth outwears the stoutest oak. It is written that Queen Anne—our soapy lady of the bath—once "came out of the great road at Liphook which is just by, and reposing herself on a bank smoothed for that purpose . . . saw with great complacency and satisfaction a whole herd of red deer . . ." *Smoothed for that purpose.* It is a hint at the manner of a royal picnic. One can fancy her puffing up the slope with a boost behind, straining at her bursted stays for breath. Her lackeys leap about with rugs and smelling salts, easing an elbow with a pillow, stuffing a cushion at her back.

We observed hereabout the mark of Roman camps on the hills—grass-grown forts on the open top and trenches scarred across the rising meadows, for England is not wholly rubbed of its ancient writing. Once upon a time I had the luck to cross

the Atlantic on the same ship with an antiquarian of Roman England who was planning for the summer an excursion along the line of Hadrian's Wall from Solway Firth to Tynemouth. He was a confiding little gentleman whose tongue ran on his favorite topic as other men talk of stocks and golf and whiskey, and he won for himself among the smoke room wags the name of Rum an' Ruins. No impertinence was offered him, but an over zeal of attentive interest spread around the table as he entered and the general tongue was in its cheek. He was scarcely five feet four as if nature had shopped for smaller odds and ends at the children's counter. But he was a gentleman with a scholar's brain.

On the great day of ocean sports these jesters of the bar pitted him, as a special event, against an English authoress of gothic lines,—mere shaft and balance—a tall stiff creature who gathered the slang of America for a learned article and whipped out a notebook to take us down. I fear that a deal of slang was coined outright and urged upon her as American commonplace of speech. She had been only in Toronto, Boston and New York, which is the usual route of inquiring Britishers, and she quizzed me on the vernacular of the middle west. Hard put, but eager to do my bit for learning, I rounded up a dozen words for drunkenness. And then, as she begged for more, I swelled the list by sheer invention—words of

inebriate sound coined quite at random. Her article must have commented on our western drunkenness when fifty words seemed needed to express its various state.

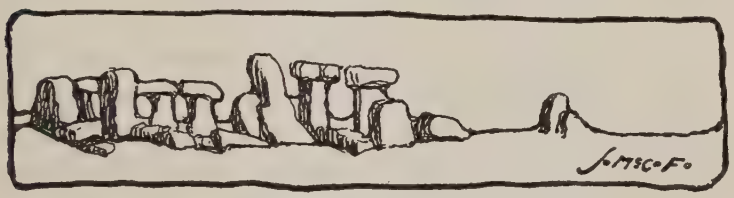
The great contest of our ocean sports was a walking race between these withered scholars three times around the ship, and the rival cheering sections crowded excitedly against the track. The lady had the pole and the higher gear and was the betting favorite. Her long white cotton outreached his prehistoric stride until the final spurt when, for the honor of his breeches, he burst into a necessary trot and won the cup. He was carried instantly to the smoke room as a hero and revived with refreshment from the bar. The dear kind soul, Rum an' Ruins, if he is yet alive, searches each summer, I fancy, with eager twinkling legs, among the crumbling remains of ancient England. And if he has now run his earthly span of years he follows still the ghostly track of Hadrian across the dizzy spaces of the sky and digs for Roman treasure beyond the stars.

Shortly after the Roman marks we passed Longmoor where soldiers were encamped, although the armistice has drained their numbers. The rules of war and the weight of ordnance have changed since the Romans trenched the hills, but civilization still sucks its rattle. As I write, French guns are trained on Essen where Germans curse their failure, the bridges of the Rhine are thick with

advancing troops and British men-of-war lie ready for the Turk.

It was near Longmoor that the Green Feather, grabbing at her hat in the wind, pitched over her handle bars; but we put her together without loss of parts.

It was shortly after noon when we came to Selborne. The inn is the Queen's Arms—scandalous hospitality cheap at seven shillings—and we had bread and cheese and ale in a stuffy dining room upstairs among cheap and awful prints of the crowning of Charlemagne and of the Princes in the Tower sitting with eternal patience to be murdered.



The extreme tide of my exhausted interest.

CHAPTER VIII

THE SHRINE OF GILBERT WHITE

AS everyone knows, except the chemist on the steps of the Wheat Sheaf Inn at Gray's Wood, the only reason for coming to Selborne is Gilbert White. It is one of those English villages forever dedicated to a single memory. I suppose that nearly everyone has read White's Natural History of Selborne, or has intended to read it. It is one of these good intentions of which the devil makes his cobblestones, and is undeniably a book without which no gentleman's library is complete. I confess that a few of its chapters are full of charm, but on the whole I fear that it has bored me. Several times I have run ashoal in its famous pages, and a dozen markers here and there indicate, like seaweed on a beach, the extreme tide of my exhausted interest. But it is at least the prince of bedtime books—a drowsy capsule to be taken without shaking among the pillows, a sleepy pellet when one is tucked inside the covers for the night.

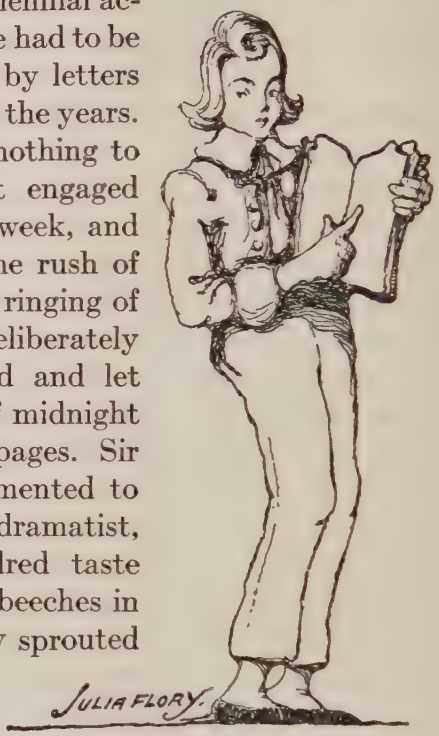
There are so many books to which we lift our hats in cold respect—books of whose slight acquaintance we are quick to brag—but we nod if they force an evening on us.

And yet I find it of interest to be in Selborne. I like to think of this village curate who lived hereabout nearly all his life, who spent his leisure in rambles on the neighboring hills, who observed the nesting birds, the rising crops, the foliage changing with the season. With what care he notes the precise arrival of the swallow—how it "breeds in chimneys; and loves to haunt those stacks where there is a constant fire"—the fashion in which the martlet builds against the wall! Now he throws in a paragraph on the habits of a tortoise that lived in a muddy pool inside his garden, and contrasts the marking of sheep in the valleys near his own. It is all so casual, so seemingly apart from conscious art—a mere record day by day and month by month of a keen-eyed gentleman roaming the fields and hills and writing of what he sees.

Every schoolboy knows—Macaulay's schoolboy, at least, who must have been a precious Rollo (the kind of boy that took lilacs to his teacher)—everyone knows that White's Selborne is comprised of letters. And really it was lucky that no one of his village shared his avocation, or his observations would have spent themselves in unrecorded talk with his neighbors at the hearth; for one single crony in the twilight would have drained

this flow of letters. It was lucky, too, that Gilbert White lived in the age of letter writing when roads were slow and long, and friends met chiefly in correspondence—when a triennial acquaintance face to face had to be patched and mended by letters against the wearing of the years.

A letter was then nothing to be scribbled at. It engaged one's evenings for a week, and was not written in the rush of business between the ringing of the telephone. One deliberately took his pen in hand and let the unbroken hours of midnight tick through endless pages. Sir Walter Scott once lamented to Joanna Baillie, the dramatist, that persons of kindred taste did not grow up like beeches in a grove but that they sprouted far apart. And so, by good fortune, the letters of Cowper were written, of Byron, of Scott, and of a hundred others in those spacious horse drawn days. As paper was then made of honest rag the writing was small to save the cost of an extra sheet, and it ran up and down and buried the previous words for added thrift.



The kind of boy that took lilacs to his teacher.

I fancy that ink wells then were mighty cisterns that held the full gallon of a winter's correspondence, and that roosters who grew the chosen quill crowed with a prouder note than their fallen kin to-day whose utmost boast is feather dusters and storage eggs. A wag of a scholar has counted the pages of Pamela's letters and by laying their total into hours at a swiftest rate of pen, has discovered that the industrious creature must have sat at her desk each day from breakfast up to midnight—lunch and dinner on a tray! A spoon in the left hand! A quill in the right!—and that she must sadly have neglected her dusting; which was, after all, the work for which she was paid. Between her letters and her fearful quest for her wicked master beneath the bed she could have had little leisure for the mop. Our own good second maid, although she wastes time on her complexion and talks endlessly with her rival lovers on the telephone, does nevertheless find time to sweep a bit.

But a letter was a letter in those golden days and it held a mighty seal. And the carrier put it in his boot among the pistols and jounced for a week to London. And he who received it got the neighbors in, and they broached a cask of ale and made a night of it. Alas, Pamela's mighty well is dry, her pen is rusty with neglect; for now she throws her broken dishes in the sink, rubs a bit of powder on her nose and rattles with her master to the movies.

Gilbert White, having no crony for his passion and held by his fellow townsmen as an odd stick of a genius, laid out his heart in letters to distant naturalists; and that is about all we know of him. An early biographer went to Selborne not

Talks endlessly with her rival lovers.

long after White's death to pick up a fact or so, but he met with scant success. One villager, it is said, informed him that "he was thought very little of till he was dead and gone, and then he was thought a great deal of." This, although an excellent text for the honor that is paid at home

to prophets, throws little light upon his life or the manner of his friendships. Another neighbor remarked that "he was a quiet old gentleman, with very oldfashioned sayings; he was very kind in giving presents to the poor, and used to keep a tortoise which crawled about his garden." Shakespeare moved not more darkly in the mist.

"We have here this winter" Gilbert White writes to his niece, "a weekly concert, consisting of first and second fiddle, two repianos, a bassoon, a hautboy, a violincello, and a German flute; to the great annoyance of the neighboring pigs . . ." It is a pleasant hint of village life, but such letters are scarce. Gilbert White—and this will have to serve —exposed in his correspondence the whole sequence of his studies; and when at the end the letters were set together and formed a book, it was he who was most amazed at the fame that came to him. Some of his discoveries and observations, I am told, have been reversed, yet the bulk of his chapters have stood the test of time.

It is a slim volume of almost careless pages, and yet its author's fame is fresh in memory. Nowadays most books are published with a loud cackle like a breakfast egg, but staleness spoils them.

Such an unnecessary deal of scribbling we writers do when so slight a product lasts so long! We perspire through a million words and run our tired volumes into sets, and the children's children of our generation elect at most to remember

but a single book. We are the lucky dozen of our time if one book alone stands for a while above the general clutter of its ten thousand brief successes. Once every third blue moon a giant arises and fills his shelf with almost equal masterpieces—for who shall choose with general consent among the works of Shakespeare or Thackeray or Dickens?—but most writers, and excellent writers too, must be content if a single volume is reprinted for the second generation of young lollypops grown up.

What besides Cranford did Mrs. Gaskell write? Quick! Your answer! Who reads Gray except in the Elegy? John Galt, I am told, labored until his long shelf was full, but the Annals of the Parish only is left. Joanna Baillie I mentioned a few pages back. Wrinkle your thought, and tell me what she wrote! Can you name the plays that once were the daily gossip of the city? Of the mass of Coleridge no more than three or four poems are read to-day by suffering students. Keats and Shelley even have shrunk to a dozen immortal pages, and time nibbles at Browning's thriftless margin.

One wonders if a cynical god never whispered to the best of these that their exalted work was done, that now with completed task they might give up the long fret of composition and run happy in the sunlight till the darkness called them. The Ancient Mariner is finished, master poet. Lay down your pen! The Grecian Urn stands on its

perfect page, and nothing you can write will stretch your memory a day. And yet they dip and scribble till their pens drop from their exhausted fingers and the long night falls upon their eyes.

Gilbert White was born in Selborne in the year seventeen-twenty in a house on the main street that still stands, although altered, and is called the Wakes. Wake means a parish festival to commemorate the dedication of a church, but it is used also for a fair or market and even for a week-end holiday, as in the play called Hindle Wakes. White was educated in the near by town of Basingstoke and later at Oriel College, Oxford, where in seventeen forty-four he was elected to a fellowship. He then held successive curacies in the neighborhood of Selborne. In seventeen fifty-five he settled in Selborne itself; inherited the Wakes in seventeen sixty-three and lived there for the remainder of his life. The first letter of his Natural History is probably the tenth of the series and is dated August fourth, seventeen sixty-seven. The series appeared as a volume in seventeen eighty-nine. He died in seventeen ninety-three—four years to see the starting of his fame—having outlived by three years his allotted three score and ten.

None of the ruffle of the world is marked upon the quiet pages of his book. And it is pleasant to think of a man cloistered in contemplation from the hurly-burly of his century as if the Hamp-

shire hills were pads upon his ears. He was born in the year of the South-Sea Bubble. He lived during England's conquest of two great empires, India and Canada. He might have read the speeches of Fox and Burke, thundering a warning to parliament lest the American colonies be lost. Some faint echo of the guns of Lexington must have sounded on his peaceful woodland. France! The rising of the third estate, the Bastille (it fell the very year his book was published) the Revolution! Did not the tumbrils of the guillotine, loaded at the tragic Conciergerie, rumble into Selborne on some quiet night when the singing stars were hushed in clouds? Or may we assume that the two fiddles and the loud bassoon were busy at the moment in the square? How little is the triumph, Marat and sea-green Robespierre, if thy shrill disturbance carries so short a distance and falters in the hills!

As a child, White might have seen Pope and Swift, and carried a cup at Buttons. In his full maturity he might have sat at the Mitre with Johnson—in old age have known Robert Burns and Walter Scott. Yet his narrative never outruns the quiet parish lying obscurely in the hills between Winchester and the Portsmouth road. It is as if a single poem of fragile loveliness—a poem that might tire one for its contentment and isolation—had been composed in a Paris attic when the sky burned red.

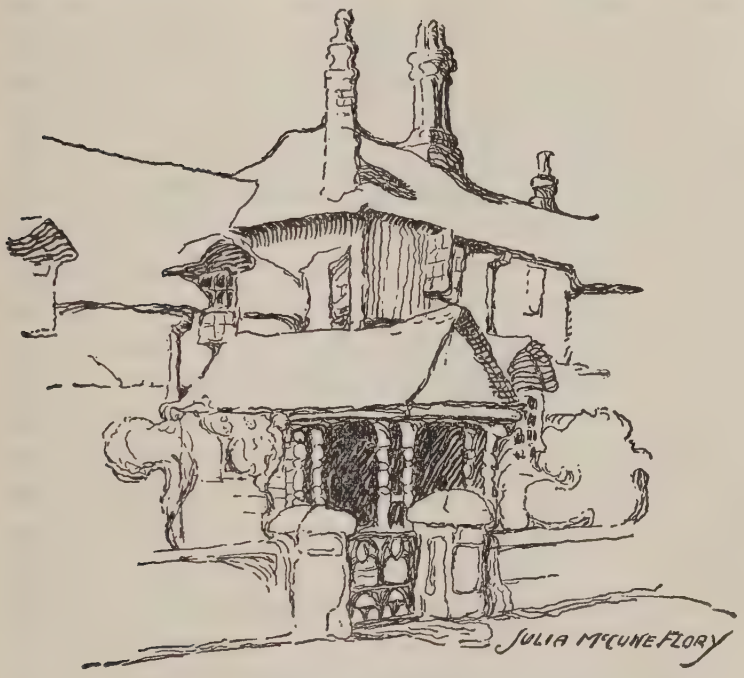
"A place of much resort on summer evenings."

Having now consumed our bread and cheese at the Queen's Arms we walked forth to see the town. It is an ordinary village with no pretension of fine houses. There is a row of close-built cottages and all of them, I fancy, as is usual in England, take employment from the manor house about which the village centers. At the top of almost its single street there is an open square with a generous tree. This square is called the Plestor, or playing place, where, writes Gilbert White, there stood "in old times, a vast oak, with short squat body and huge horizontal arms, extending almost to the extremity of the area. This venerable tree," he continues, "surrounded with stone steps, and seats above them, was the delight of old and young, and a place of much resort on summer evenings; where the former sat in grave debate, while the latter frolicked and danced before them. Long might it have stood, had not the amazing tempest in 1703 overturned it at once." Under a sycamore that was planted to replace the oak Gilbert White must have sat through the English twilight—a silent sort of man, reserved among his neighbors, with his mind running on longer paths.

Almost adjoining the Plestor is the Wakes. It is rather a jumbled building of unsoftened outline as seen from the street, with upstart chimneys and newer roofs that rise too proudly above the older part, as if they followed a changing fash-

ion down from London. But ivy runs across the front to shield its pretense.

And now our landlord was of service. He had suggested that we knock boldly and announce



A jumbled building of unsoftened outline.

ourselves as pilgrims from over seas. A solemn footman took our names and disappeared—very good names in their way, as Alfred Jingle once remarked to Mr. Tupman at the Rochester ball—"capital names for a small party, but won't make an impression in public assemblies." The foot-

man, however, came back presently with word that we were welcome. And as I scraped my boots I scraped my memory also for any stray facts in the life of Gilbert White, any phrases from his book that would keep me from the shame of ignorance; for the footman had a solemn cast of eye, as if a vast encyclopedia lived behind to expose a shallow tripper thrown within his clutches.

The study is shown, a great room with broad windows on the garden at the rear and a glimpse of wooded hills—a room that is cluttered with White's relics. It is here that he composed his letters. "My great parlour," he wrote once to his sister, "turns out a fine warm winter room, and affords a pleasant equal warmth. In blustering weather the chimney smokes a little till the shaft becomes hot. The chief fault that I find" he continues, "is the strong echo, which, when many people are talking, makes confusion to my poor dull ears." There is still an echo, but it is a quiet echo of its long silence through more than a hundred years.

The keeping of this stiff room is the fee that the present owners pay the public for living in a celebrated house. It is held inviolate to satisfy tourist curiosity, and the past is its only life. These houses of the great linger on in sacred widowhood and pay eternally a cold devotion to the dead. At most now and then a housemaid comes in to dust, but I think she tiptoes among

the bric-a-brac and is quite chilled by a ghostly presence. And really it must be rather horrid to live within four walls where a room is kept as a perpetual graveyard of consecration, where the coffin, as it were, and the flowers of melancholy ritual, lie out exposed. It is a museum, a funeral, what you will, exempt from present life and, until a pilgrim taps, its doors are shut upon the tomb. Unless a family, so housed with death, grips itself firmly in the present and leads a vivid life it must sink to a mere custodian and move with glassy eye among its relics.

White's chair is shown and no doubt a ribbon bars its use; and I seem to remember his ink pot and his pens. There was a stuffy feeling in the place as if vases, out of fashion and undervalued in the more human rooms, had been set here in harmless guile under pretext of antiquity; as we ourselves tote them to the attic whenever style has changed its whim. Gilbert White alive would have tossed up the window and let the wind blow in.

The Wakes has been until recently the property of a famous family that keeps us clean; and its corridors have echoed with morning salutation and inquiry whether everyone has used the family soap.

The house itself shows evidence of generous remodeling and enlargement. The entrance hall seems once to have been the sitting room. The low-ceiled kitchen, I think, was formerly the dining room. I recall a monk's chair that folded to

a table, a cradle that was a nursery for sprouting flowers, a bed that fell curiously from a cabinet in the wall with swinging doors. But I went no farther among the rooms, and I would have preferred to turn my back upon the past and to range in the rooms of present use and see how a living generation sets its furniture.

The door man, having reaped his scornful profit, now consigned us to the gardener. The Wakes is crowded against the village street, but at the rear there are several acres of fine lawn overhung by a wooded hill. I asked the gardener if this wood were the hanger mentioned in the history, a single fact that lodged with me, and thereby gained great credit for erudition. Henceforth we talked as equals, man to man. A brick path leads across the lawn and we were told that Gilbert White laid the bricks himself and walked there in muddy weather. It ascends to the left through a scanty grove of ripe old trees, each labeled with its aristocratic Latin, and issues to the hanger—"a vast hill of chalk, rising three hundred feet above the village . . . The covert of this eminence is altogether beech, the most lovely of all forest trees . . ."

To the right of the lawn is an inclosure of flowers and vegetables and I may have seen the very patch of mud where the tortoise wallowed in hot weather. Altogether it is such a spot as one seldom finds except in England—tightly hidden from the village and yet open to the hills.

The gardener had now earned his half crown. He wavered a bit whether he should not—as one friendly servant to another—consign us to the stableman for continuing fee, but finally released us directly to the street. The church was still to be seen, a weathered building with worn tablets of many of White's subsidiary relatives. There is a great yew in the graveyard, which seemed threatened with an apoplexy. In almost every English graveyard there stands a yew, and I have read—but know not the truth—that an early king, finding a shortage of wood suitable for bows, ordered that a yew be planted in every churchyard of the kingdom, against the fear of a French invasion. And thus a measure of national defense by a kind of irony has made the yew eternally a tree of mourning.

It was the middle of the afternoon when we pedaled out of Selborne. Our road lay up hill and down, and presently we spread our rubber capes and slept. A cart of smart country folk went by and looked at us as at filthy picnickers, for we are too sure that our gentleness shines through dust. It was Stevenson, traveling as an emigrant to America, who remarked that the first-class cabin saw no difference between himself and his raw companions on the lower deck.

And then we rode to the village of East Tisted. Hereabout is the entrance to Rotherfield Park which, by the pretense of its gates and lodge, seemed a place of vast importance. We skirted the park and passed a wood that was deep with

bluebells. We stood for a minute on the wall to look at its mingled color, for it would have been cruel destruction to tramp in so fair a garden. The shade was flecked with broken light as if the sun with moorings lost had struck against the hill and spilled its golden liquor. Great squat beeches with long arms, built like champion wrestlers, stood about waiting for a challenge.

Our next town of any size was New Alresford which was again on the London road. It was here that Miss Mary Mitford was born who wrote Our Village. It is a bustling town of broad streets and some pretension of business. I had hoped that her house might be on the main street and that we might see it without special pedaling, but an obliging local thumb pointed so vaguely around a corner that a tea shop near at hand seemed a better destination.

We therefore bartered Miss Mitford for cakes and drink. You might leave us in the tea shop for an hour to the soft music of our hungry munching.

CHAPTER IX

CHIEFLY ABOUT VILLAGE AUTHORS

I CONFESS a great liking for stories that deal with English village life, if the locality is remote from larger industry and from the insistence of material progress. Any county will serve that is beyond the rattle of Lancashire looms and is quite free of coal and factories, although by choice I would pitch it in the south.

"A ripple of land; such little hills, the sky
Can stoop to tenderly and the wheatfields climb."

A small plot is best that seldom runs down to London, that centers snugly about the pretty daughter of the squire or the new arrival of the vicar, that traffics leisurely from manor house to cottage and holds a feudal picnic on the lawn while the old folk inside bicker at their whist. Its people

one would wish for neighbors and, as we turn the pages, we exchange in fancy an informal dinner or pass a pleasant time of day as we meet them in the village street.

Nor must we be a snob entirely. If a full quota of chapters is laid among the teacups of good society we consent that the story take a fling now and then toward meaner folk. A humorous dustman in his customary cups or perhaps a thirsty gardener—spotted creatures that might offend our actual nose—may drink through a merry paragraph and stain the page with liquor to our huge delight. Indeed, were prohibition to play censor along our shelves and clip the books to a lean percent, the joy of reading would be cut in half.

As I find them in these English books I like all country sights and sounds, and even smells that are too poignant in themselves enter my nostrils like welcome guests. The odor of a cow shed, though praised by noses finer than my own, still brings me no delight, and I look on the whole business of milking as something that borders on the vulgar; but in a book I can idle through a pleasant chapter of smell and dung. Dogs and skittish horses—although I am indifferent or hostile to them on the living hoof—serve an agreeable purpose in the background of a story, and when safe at home I take wall and ditch like a reckless hunter in a coat of red. In an easy chair on my hearth I am every inch the master of the hounds.

And here let me say, quite within parenthesis, that the casual dogs of England are a gentler race than their cousins of America. Not once on a cycling or walking trip does a cur run barking to the hedge, nor must any tree be climbed for refuge. An entrance to a village is not a general signal that a banquet comes their way. They do not sniff behind as if in rumination whether their feast shall be off the left leg or the right. A stranger is not regarded as a toothsome morsel to be torn apart by the rivalry of many kennels, in order that his nutritious bones may be buried against a leaner time of want. Nor do English dogs elect themselves in pure conceit to be the guardians of the countryside, and trot as snarling comrades until one has crossed the township line. Christian went softly past a lion and several dragons in the valley of despair but he was not pestered by a dog.

Our American dogs, on the other hand, like pioneers in a rougher country, show more assertion, a wider range and more offensive regard for their neighbor's property; and at some time in their racial history it is sure that they fed on human flesh. You dog! You pup! You hound! You cur! are certainly not the coinage of compliment. Someone, it seems, must think with me.

Be this as it may, I choose that the stage of our English story be no larger than a market town and that a scene of wooded hills shut it from the hurried world.

Nor should its tranquil plot be stirred by any smooth whiskered viper from the city to endanger our country maidens. Since the days when the Vicar of Wakefield's unsuspecting daughter ran afoul of one of these purring dogs this has been too much the custom of village novels. Did not Tess ride once too often with her wicked cousin from the city? There are enough dangers in the night without a dirty cupid to pop his horrid arrow through the dark. A foppish creasing of the trousers, a fringe of silky whiskers, a pomade that shines the hair, should betray these villains at the start. Let there be an honest courtship with consent of parents and a sanctioned moon! In shadowy lanes may our lovers wander and touch hands in a friendly twilight till June shall bring them to the village church.

In these stories I demand no villain. At most I consent to a prying gossip at a knot hole to muddle the early chapters with her venom, but she should be killed before the final page so that the good shall happily prevail.

It is not, as I hinted, that I am myself devoted to country circumstance (pitcher and pump and icy basin—all that sort of thing that wrecks the happy dawn), or that I wish to spend more than an idle week of August in such retirement. I cannot follow those who think that a love of country simplicity is itself a virtue, or that an affection for a pig or cow is nobler than a fondness of one's

city neighbors. Really, it is sometimes the subservience of animals that gains them our affection; and if a dog and cow could speak with opinion unwelcome to our hobbies, like the free acquaintance of our street, their favor would decline. And surely Peter-at-the-gate, fitting out better folk with harps, puts no love of dumb animals in his dreaded questionnaire. A pleasant word across the fence, with an exchange of flour or butter to meet a shortage in the pantry, is a quicker ticket into heaven than any lonely meditation on a mountain top with God and his angels rising in the wind.

To turn your back through all the year upon your kind savors too much of misanthropy, and I look with distaste on John the Baptist and all such monkish folk who left the busy genial world for solitary retreat and thanked the saints that the streets were bare of men.

"In London I never know what I'd be at,
Enraptured with this, and enchanted with that;
I'm wild with the sweets of variety's plan,
And Life seems a blessing too happy for man.

"But the country, Lord help me! sets all matters right,
So calm and composing from morning to night;
Oh! it settles the spirits when nothing is seen
But an ass on a common, a goose on a green."

This was written by Captain Charles Morris, who was a friend of Beau Brummel and the Prince

of Wales, and of course he goes too far in his scorn of country. Johnson, too, is wrong perhaps, in his preference for the smell of a link in the fog of Drury Lane; and Elia for walking too constantly on the Strand. Nevertheless I choose to live in the city where friends are thick and to take my country life at second hand in these village books. Like a factory girl who reads cheaply of dukes and millionaires, I strike thus a balance in my life.

In this preference I find myself cheek by jowl with Leslie Stephen who went so far as to write an essay on the subject. "I, too, love the country . . ." he writes, "but I love it best in books. In real life I have remarked that it is frequently damp and rheumatic, and most hated by those who know it best." This essay is one of the most charming of a charming writer. It is a paper which, as Stevenson said of a page of Hazlitt, should levy a tax against those who have not read it. How delightfully he puts his preference! "I love" he continues, "to lean upon the farmyard gate; to hear Mrs. Poyser give a bit of her mind to the squire; to be lulled into a placid doze by the humming of Dorlecote Mill . . . or to drop into the kitchen of a good old country inn, and to smoke a pipe with Tom Jones or listen to the simple-minded philosophy of Parson Adams . . . It is pleasant to take down one of the magicians of the shelf, to annihilate my neighbor and its even-

ing parties, and to wander off through quiet country lanes into some sleepy hollow of the past."

I agree with this heartily. Indeed, this essay by frequent reading has come almost to be of my own creation, and in a dreamy exalted hour I claim it for my own.

All English country books, even stupid narratives of travel, yield me a measure of enjoyment—Burritt, the learned blacksmith, on journey to John O' Groat's; Harper, who writes interminably of the roads of England; and that other writer, whose name has slipped me, who was forever jumping into a dogcart and trotting off to make a book of it. Archibald Marshall is delightful because of his village setting. It is Selborne and the vicar, rather than Latin trees and chirping birds, that bid us turn to Gilbert White. Almost once a year it is wise to loiter through the tales of Barchester and the whole set is placed best on a reading stand beside one's bed. Indeed, I know a man who always keeps it there and travels nightly round and round from month to month. There is something of peace and quiet in this reader's eyes which I think must have gathered in this customary interlude between day and night; and surely dreams are innocent that start from the vicar's homely parlor.

You must not think, however, that my taste in books is entirely for country homespun and that I utterly decline the white waistcoats of

Mayfair. In cloth covers I have been tremendously a snob and a frequent guest in lofty houses where two men at least are needed to hand me in to dinner. Vauxhall I like, where Sir Roger frolicked once by wherry with his merry widow; and Ranelagh Gardens to which Pepys was truant with Mrs. Knepp of Drury Lane, singing merrily home at midnight. The shiny silver of Park Lane! Plots from Paris! Horses' hoofs at dawn, strange alarms, murder, shipwreck and sunken treasure! None of these are alien to a proper taste. But on the whole and by and large it is the English country books that please me most; and if I turn fresh pages in a bookshop, any first paragraph that looks on Surrey hills with tea and muffins in the garden, is quite enough to tempt the itching money from my pocket.

But books follow the fashion as closely as a woman's hat or skirt, and authors who look for prodigious sales are as alert as a maker of shoes to keep within a current style. Now and then, of course, a reckless fellow who can digest tripe snaps his fingers at the dollars and writes of what he pleases; but for the most part, like haberdashers, they build their stock to meet an advertised demand. To the prudent author the Saturday Evening Post is a trade paper—a continuous instruction to show the trend of the fashion he must follow to grow rich in his sordid business—and he studies it week by week as a milliner and a dentist study their

monthly shop periodicals to learn the arrival of something new in feathers and metal fillings. No mercenary author may be without the latest hint from Philadelphia, where prices for studious carpentry range the highest. Lately in New York I sat at lunch with two such seekers after fortune, and all three of us, with the Post between our soups, discussed the sale of words—whether it were better to take in freedom a hundred dollars from a periodical of small sale, or write in harness on the chance that we win a thousand.

There was a vogue once for historical romance, a fading echo from the days of Dumas and Scott, and the plots were laid in the dashing court of Henry of Navarre or on undiscovered Balkan hills. It was fashion merely, like bobbed hair and a short skirt. Peace to the chilly ashes of Zenda and of Rupert! Their valiant sword rusts on a neglected shelf. Next the novel of white slavery swept the country like a plague, and there was hardly a debutante unfamiliar with the dirty under-garment of the world. There followed the story of the "great clean, open spaces of the west"—I quote from the gaudy jackets of a hundred novels—"where a man was a man and a woman was a woman."

And the pity lay in this, that for a chance of quick success, unknown authors wrote in a field foreign to their experience.

And then a crop of books sprouted from the trenches of the war. And sex came to be the uni-

versal plot—sex, not as in the days of the Restoration when it was a loose affair of gallantry, but sex that posed in realistic uplift and leered from a scarlet pulpit, sex introspective that analyzed its dreams and demanded license. Time had been but a few years back when the heroine, however much belabored, had escaped her wicked Sheik. But now, alas, her undoing is made a moral end; for it is holier in these present days to snap your fingers at Queen Victoria and the marriage service and to elope with a new companion than to endure a tired husband from the city who reads the colored supplement and dozes after dinner. With the fall of skirts, now arrived from Paris, we may expect an abatement of the nuisance. Familiar as her garter—a phrase once used in prophecy of our liberal time—must sink again to obscure disuse.

And I suppose that books in the fashion of Main Street are already on the wane by a tip from Philadelphia. It was only a few months ago that a thousand of our most industrious authors were pounding their typewriters to catch an echoing profit from its tremendous sales, and that every bookstand flared with the pictures of tawdry American villages.

I cannot give my heart to these books of American towns and country life. We admit freely that our villages, except in favored districts, lack the charm of their English cousin. This must be so in a newer country where the softer life of cul-

ture and advantage clings to the larger cities. Corrugated iron roofs! Billboards put up by our nationally known tires and soap! The pedantic literary club! The pinched horizon! The restricted outlook from parlor and butcher shop! These things we admit as imperfections. Have not I confessed that I preferred a city? But Spoon River! And Winesburg! And Main Street!

Cranford and Barchester were not Paris, nor was Miss Mitford's village London. And their narrowness confessed did not turn to scorn.

My childhood knew a city, then not so very large. The district where I lived was cut off from the denser town by a long bridge above lumber yards and shipping, and we sprawled for a mile or so to the open country in quite a village fashion. Such uneven beauty as we had was marred by a chimney here and there, and a row of cluttered tenements lay behind our street in an untidy nest of alleys. We were not Main Street, it is true, but we were a second generation that had moved to town. We had the usual village half wit—a poor deformed lad whom we vilely pelted with snowballs until now my memory sickens at the outrage. There was a crazy negro who beat carpets and was said to sleep in an outhouse. There was a gang of Irish below the hill who charged upon us when we went to school. Some of our boys fell into evil habits and were disgraced. Gossip—a funny story of too much drinking—concerned a

neighbor here and there. Here is sufficient tragedy for Spoon River. Doubtless many tombstones in our graveyard would tell of scandal if their sordid tongues could speak.

Yet there rises in my memory a host of friendly neighbors—folk who dropped in to eat an apple after supper—cronies who came for whist and stayed for cider. Any woman was a nurse in time of illness, and a better batch of jelly was sampled across the fence. One neighbor made German Christmas cakes as often as the year came round and she always sent us a loaded basket. Carpets were covered with canvas and we danced to midnight, with a feast of ice cream to end. Twenty children played hide-and-seek in the summer twilight, and if ever a kiss were passed among them it was a theft whose rare sweetness lingers through the years. There were tennis and croquet, swimming in the lake, and at New Year's we climbed the ghostly church tower to ring the bell. A company of youngsters acted Aladdin in the attic; and there is not an angle, turn or stairway that does not echo with pleasant games.

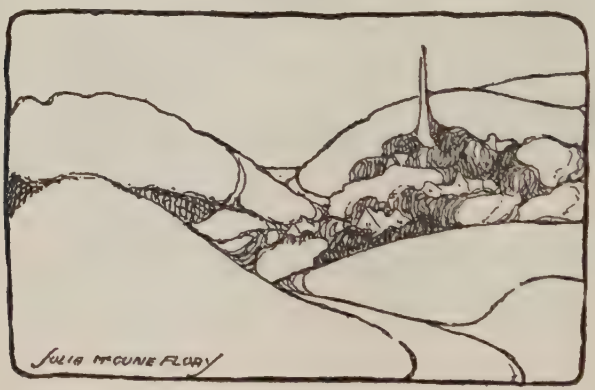
Was there never a man or woman of Main Street with gentleness of soul, of finer outlook on the world? Are all men of business hard and stupid? Must all village girls mix in ugly scandal? Rich man, poor man, beggar man, thief; doctor, lawyer, merchant, chief! Is every one of them a quack and trickster? Main Street roused the anger of

Cronies who came for whist and stayed for cider.

the west not for the truth it said but for the truth it declined to say. Sinclair Lewis' notebook was perversely closed to all the fairer side of life, for his sullen dial marked clouds and ignored the sun. Some day a man of broader vision and simpler understanding will lay his plot in an unlovely American village and will weave truthfully a thread of beauty that will redeem the pattern.

And now let us sip our tea at New Alresford and meditate that it was in this town that Miss Mitford was born and spent her childhood. At the next table a boy and girl touch fingers beneath the board; and to such a hint our darker American mind would have loosed a scandal and set up a dirty tombstone.

Next winter, when fires are lighted, we shall read Our Village, and see in fancy the pleasant roads and towns where now we pedal.



An extra dinosaur that wept for passage.

CHAPTER X

BRIEF PAGES TO END A WEARY DAY

IN some measure restored by tea we lifted our bicycles from their tangled heap; for they were as exhausted as ourselves and lay pillowed on one another in a weary nest.

It was five miles to Winchester—not a five miles that runs in the nimble glory of the morning, but a broken pilgrim of the twilight who would forswear his god and call any nearest inn his shrine. We would not have turned an unnecessary corner for the Taj Mahal or Noah's ark with its bearded skipper beating off an extra dinosaur that wept for passage. There was no cabin left and now the unhappy creature is extinct.

We stood only for a moment to remark that the high street of New Alresford was a broad and barren thoroughfare lined with shops without pretense of beauty, then pedaled stiffly out of town.

Presently we were given a choice of roads, but we took the one along the river Itchen because it started on the level. This is one of many streams in which Izaak Walton fished. It is the tiniest flow of water, and between town and town it stretches through a meadow where grasses hang upon its brim, and trees and bushes offer covert to an angler. We passed thatched and half-timbered houses, and one of these may have been the very cottage where Walton went for drink and talked with the pretty milkmaid. I "love all anglers," she replied, "they be such honest, civil, quiet men . . . Will you drink a draught of red cow's milk?"

We traversed a broad paved road on which an occasional motor hurried out of London. These motors are chiefly of American tourists, for the English drive but little in these slim years, except trippers who cheaply crowd the charabancs. It was the end of a weary day and I remember little of the ride to Winchester. We were more concerned to catch a glimpse of any tower that marked our destination. I recall no more than a dirty moment when Gingerale slipped on fresh-laid tar in the mending of the road and was nearly crushed by a flying motor. Among my postal cards is a footbridge at Martyr Worthy with the Itchen hardly a flying leap. On a background of timbered houses an old woman carries a pail. Let us convince ourselves that she is the great-

granddaughter of Walton's pretty friend carrying to another angler a drink of red cow's milk when twilight brings him from the stream.

Martyr Worthy sounds as if its market place once blazed with the fires of Smithfield. But questions of this kind arise in almost every village to tease a curious tourist. A book called Words and Places attempts in an agreeable wholesale to answer these inquiries. It asserts that a knowledge of the tongues that have melted into English is a sufficient guide to early history.

Local names, it asserts, are not arbitrary sounds devoid of meaning, but they record invasion, settlement, the mingling of races by war and peaceful process. They may even attest an event that history has failed to note. The names of ancient towns are still uttered, unchanged in a single letter "while fragments of marble columns, or of sculptures in porphyry or granite, are seen strewing the site confusedly. . . . Wars may trample down or extirpate whatever grows upon a soil, excepting only its wild flowers, and the names of those sites upon which man has found a home." They are the lexicon of forgotten language, and they preserve the knowledge of "forests that have been cleared, marshes that have been drained, coast lines that have advanced seaward, rivers that have extended their deltas or found new channels, estuaries that have been converted into alluvial soil, lakes that have been silted up, islands

that have become gentle inland slopes surrounded by waving corn-flats. . . . The hills, the valleys, and the rivers are, in fact, the only writing-tablets on which unlettered nations have been able to inscribe their annals."

I do not quite know how these things are learned but it is all in the book. And it gives one a new pleasure in a map that contains ancient history so completely. I shall crib once more from chapters that concern the British Isles.

"England is pre-eminently the land of hedges and inclosures. . . . And if we compare the local names in England with those on the Continent, we shall find that for more than a thousand years . . . the suffixes which occur most frequently in Anglo-Saxon names denote an inclosure of some kind —something hedged, walled in, or protected."

Ton and *tun* and *tine*, like the tine of a fork for spearing food (their derivation is the same) mean twig and refer to the fence of boughs and sticks (a stick was the early fork) that gave towns their first security. Town itself is a variant of *ton*. Yard is akin to guard, and *garth* indicates a place that is girded round. And *stock* and *stoke* are places stockaded against assault. *Haigh* and *hay* are a hedge. And *bury* and *borough* and *burgh* have their root in shelter and show that a wall was built for refuge. Thus endings are scattered everywhere on the map of England and indicate not only a dangerous society, but also an en-

deavor to hold the home inviolate. They are the origin of "the Englishman's home is his castle," which is his cornerstone of liberty. Garden, if traced to an early century, is a guarded place, and the present wall and hedge that shut it from vagrant curiosity descend from rougher days.

These are but crumbs on a banquet floor.

Ing is a patronymic and in Kettering, for example, it indicates the abode of the Ketter family. It shows that Saxon immigration was one of families or clans, and that it came for quiet settlement and to found a home. The invasion from Scandinavia, on the other hand, is marked in the names of individuals instead of families—adventurers and pirates—as in Grimsby or Asgarby.

A slightest touch of scholarship will betray Pontefract as a Roman village that stood on a stream too deep to ford—an important town on a trade route that maintained a bridge. Then disaster or hard times came, its bridge fell to decay and lay broken and unused for many years—for so long an evil period that those who dwelt near by, when asked their place of residence, became accustomed to reply that they lived by the broken bridge—at *Ponte Fracte.* "Marvelous!" exclaims Dr. Watson. "A mere application of scientific principle," replies Mr. Holmes, adjusting the needle to his arm.

The very recurrence of place names that end in *ford* is ample evidence of the difficulty of travel

and communication when bridges were so scarce. And the few towns whose names terminate in *bridge* stand always like Tunbridge and Cambridge, on trifling streams.

Crumbs only! Words and Places might profitably be read by those who travel leisurely through England; for it whets the appetite to dig to the root of language and learn from what racial seeds and through what strange adventures these delightful villages endured.

Time and the hour runs through the roughest day. Hard on dinner we entered Winchester inside the west gate, and near the top of the high street we popped around the corner to the Old George Inn. I had difficulty in lifting my stiff broken-down left leg across the saddle; and I dropped my bicycle in a heap for the porter to disentangle. Even Gingerale had ceased to foam and effervesce, and the Green Feather sat waiting for her room, collapsed and limp like a bag of laundry set out for collection. Any Chinaman from force of habit would have tossed her to the wash.

The George Inn at Winchester is a fine old hostelry of several hundred years. It sticks out a tongue at a hotel in Glastonbury in rival claim as the oldest of all England. The corridors and stairways are hung with prints and records, and there is a musty smell which, although of doubtful comfort to an actual nose, is yet an agreeable

suggestion of its antiquity. I am not sure by what delicate titillation of the proboscive channel is this odorous influx registered on the nasal sense—am I clear?—; but I am inclined to think that little breezes of the past, having romped the windy streets when Alfred was alive, have now fallen out of breath and have crept for rest to these hospitable halls to snuggle in the carpets. They are pensioners, as it were, cheaply taking room and dole of an easy landlord. And now and then at the coming of a pilgrim's foot they rouse themselves to breathe their dusty tale of ancient days. Housekeepers, unless they be deeply antiquarian, are offended by this snug tenantry of the soapless past; but by and large I would choose the George almost first among the city inns of provincial England.

What was once the stable yard is now flagged and roofed with glass for after-dinner coffee, and there is not a mark of its former use except a great arch under which the jolly coaches passed. It is these inns that link us sharply to the older novelists and set a scene for our instruction.

We went forth in the soft May twilight to see the town. I remember a market cross and a large building set about with trees that may have been the cathedral, but I saw it darkly as through a weary glass.

And so to bed! And from the pavement there arose the slow music of pattering feet that marks so distinctively an English town, where there are

no tramways to mar the quiet melodies of night. It is not a frisky tune such as beats on the gayer stones of Paris; but quiet notes on a sober staff, as if homely folk went arm in arm. A bell bore us a message from an ancient tower—a bell that may have sounded on the drowsy ear of great King Alfred.

And so to sleep! And I dreamed that I rode my bicycle seven times around the moon and climbed a hill to find Orion at the top.

CHAPTER XI

A DULL CHAPTER TO BE SKIPPED

WINCHESTER is our first city since we shook the London pavements, and a narrative which ran easily across the countryside grows fatigued in the constant challenge of city streets.

Almost every building carried its message from the past. Every wall is a palimpsest of used parchment on which history has written its transient fact and then erased the record to make a thrifty space to write again. It is with cities as with ourselves. We scrawl experience on our brain and, although we wash its memory in fresh adventure, the ink has sunk indelibly to mark our character forever.

Books—I have seen the sentence somewhere—

libraries, even, might be written about Winchester. It epitomizes, almost as much as London, the whole course of English history. Its streets heard the Celtic tribes of Stonehenge and their worship of the sun. Its dust is the funeral of Roman legions. Saxon and Dane, Gallic priest and Norman, have patched the ruin of their predecessors and trimmed the lamp that leads us from the past. It were asking too much of a cyclist with yesterday's stiffness in his legs to do more than choose a pleasant spot and sleep for an hour with fallen book; and if he dream his vision must sweep a thousand years and heap the precious discard of the past. It was Rosalind who cared not for her spirits if her legs were not so weary. The lovely creature—this is my own discovery—must have pedaled down to Arden in doublet and hose. I wonder if she, too, had a little finger on her bicycle for changing gear where the grade was stiff.

The beginnings of Winchester are buried in the hills and a spade were needed to find the source, but on the slope of St. Catherine's above the town are earthworks overgrown with grass that mark the defenses of a Celtic tribe in days before Christ had trod the shore of Galilee. Then the Romans ran across the flat spaces of the world and pitched upon the place. Coins of the third and fourth centuries have been found, vases and utensils and bits of tessellated pavement. Whiskered scholars—

all the kin of Rum an' Ruins on our steamship—suppose that they sailed into Southampton Water, made one or two preliminary camps and then followed the Itchen north. Here was an opening in the hills with rich plains beyond for crops and cattle, a district to be subdued by a central fortress.

That Winchester came to be a town of first importance is shown by the remains of six Roman roads that radiate to the rim of England. Rustic independence builds its roads entirely for its neighbors' use and cares not if their crookedness confuse the traffic between city and city. But these Roman roads are straight as a yardstick, without the natural loop and curve that mark the grace of leisurely and more local growth and rule. It was a nation that the Romans built and their roads reflect this larger purpose. On these roads running out from Winchester, as on the roads that stretched from London and from York and Lincoln, the Roman power advanced until the island had been claimed to the north and west. And Winchester became the gateway into England for that large measure of thought and custom from the east that are still our heritage. Here was a door where the ancient world, cumbered with gifts and precious alien luggage, knocked to pay a visit to the west and, dying, bequeathed its legacy. And when at last its will was read and understood, England in its altered toga went out to lay its imperial hand on far-off countries and the islands

of the sea. But for many centuries at Winchester there was lodged for a wide district the machinery of Roman force and law. And not till the city on seven hills was battered by Goth and Vandal and its legions were required at home did its power in England fail. The present Winchester adheres to the Roman plan and the high street between gate and gate went for several hundred years by a Latin name.

The Germanic invasions followed—the Angles from Sleswick who brought us the root of parliament and the first hint of government by representatives (as yet but a folk-meet of the village)—the Angles followed and they wiped off, as from a slate that's scrawled with neglected lessons, the brief record of their predecessors. They patched the walls to be their stronghold and substituted a pagan worship for that of the Christian church from Rome. England, during these years of pillage and destruction, lost its contact with the culture of the continent and was covered by a northern darkness. Certain enduring habits of life and government the invaders brought—perhaps the seed of the Magna Charta—but to the casual eye there came from Sleswick across the sea no more than the sword of death. It was only when a Jutish king, Æthelbert of Kent, married a Frankish woman and by her invitation Augustine set up his catholic shrine at Canterbury in the year five ninety-seven—it was only then that the roads

were reopened for eastern civilization. The monks, chanting their solemn Latin litany, were the return of the Roman legions in a softer form. The Latin tongue became the ritual of worship and seeped from the cloister into the general language; and Roman arts and letters, Latin thought and practice, that had fled from the sword of Hengist, returned with the Christian faith and took room with us forever.

It is in the seventh century that the written history of Winchester begins with the coming of the Benedictines. They were led by St. Birinus, an Italian monk and bishop, who built his church where the present cathedral stands. In a few years Winchester became the residence of the kings of Wessex, of those Saxons whose work still shows in many of the ancient walls of England.

But the real greatness of Winchester starts in the year eight hundred and two when Ecgbert climbed the Saxon throne. Under the vigor of his rule English supremacy was transferred to Wessex from Northumbria and Mercia. Before his death he was styled the King of all Britain and he made at least a gesture of authority to the Scottish border.

But already, while he was yet alive, there came another menace across the German ocean. Danish pirates rounded the headlands of the north and east—where Danish names still stand—and sailed up the creeks and rivers. *Vi* means creek and in the word Vikings we find, not a racial sign, but a

place of landing and attack. At the prow of their ships was carved the hostile raven of Scandinavia and a new invasion had begun.

At first Winchester, inland and far to the south, took no harm. Indeed, the coming of the Danes for a time increased its strength. For the power of England before the days of Ecgbert had been miserably divided among the rival Saxon kingdoms. But under the Danish threat these domestic jealousies were thrown aside and Wessex, with its capitol at Winchester, arose as the English champion. In the general ruin of the north it became the most conspicuous seat of strength and ancient culture. It was during this havoc beyond the Thames, while yet the south held out, that Alfred took the English throne.

Alfred was a strong king, but his strength has been defiled by the pious stories of our early schoolbooks—too much soft recital of study at his mother's knee and love of canaries. Our own great Washington in similar fashion labors to recover from his little hatchet.

During eight years of war Alfred met the swarming Danes with such vigor that he forced them to a standstill and, by a pact with them in the year eight hundred and seventy-eight, England was cut into two parts, Wessex and the Danelaw, by a line drawn from the Thames below London northwest to Chester. And now at Winchester Alfred ruled for eighteen peaceful years.

This is the golden age when Winchester stood on tiptoe as the chief city of all England, a time of fairest legend. There came scholars and artists from the continent until it rivaled the court of Charlemagne. Poems were made and sung to listening casements as in the hotter south. The code, also, of the Saxon law was drawn. Here was commenced the English Chronicle, written partly in Alfred's own hand. Not only is this the first history of England but it is the mother of all our literature—*editio princeps*. The manuscript was kept at Wolvesey Castle, fastened by a chain, and pious monks in sunny cloisters drew pictures on the margin with gold and purple pens of the birth and death of kings. Were these shining years as golden as they seem—peasants clapping their wooden clogs in country dances, drinking honest pewter liquor and sleeping unfretted in Elysium? Did old folk sun themselves in pleasant arbors and nod to a happy end? Did love run a smoother course and kiss and trot to church to be faithful ever after? The icy fang and churlish chiding of the winter's wind —were these the only penalties of Adam? A wind arises from the purple hills and ancient signboards gravely shake their heads in answer.

It is in the reign of Alfred that the name of St. Swithun pops into history. He was pious and wise with that kind of wisdom that we associate with a long white beard, and probably he directed the Prince's education. St. Swithun built a bridge at

the town-foot. He built a strong wall of defense around the Cathedral precincts, on whose ruins the close-wall stands to-day. Seven cities lie uncovered on the hill of Troy, each resting on its predecessor. Rome and London rise layer on layer from an old deposit. The chronicle of life, with its instructive text that binds the forgetful generations, endlessly reiterates how we rise from the foundations of the past, how our brief egotism must be content if it add a pinnacle or replace a broken buttress. This would be a lesson in the futility of hasty revolution if our emptier radicals could read.

"When I was a King and a Mason—a Master proven and skilled—
I cleared me ground for a Palace such as a King should build.
I decreed and dug down to my levels. Presently, under the silt,
I came on the wreck of a Palace such as a King had built."

Rome was not buried in a day and the tide of dust that rose to cover it obeyed a moon that but dawdled on a longer circuit. And this dust is cousin to the dust that to-day eddies in our street and gathers in untrodden rooms. It is brother to the mud that we scrape from our feet lest we soil the carpet. If left neglected for a thousand years it would bury us again until a new world

were built upon our top. Is not Friday the general day for sweeping? It should comfort the housewife who frets upon her task that it is her broom that keeps us from future desolation.

St. Swithun is known to us chiefly as the saint who brings on rainy weather. He is the patron of the umbrella and the gummed golosh, and art should so invest him.

It seems that when he grew old and died he was buried in very usual fashion in the graveyard. Later, when perhaps a century had rolled by and many marvelous legends had been invented round him, it was decided that his precious bones should be disinterred and buried more fittingly in a golden shrine within the church. The pilgrims' pennies, it was thought, would be better guarded if their box hung inside with a monk to watch.

Art should so invest him.

And now everything was ready for the pageant

when by ill luck it began to rain. The Bishop, in his Sunday best, held up a wet finger to feel the wind; then, with prophecy of better weather, scurried inside to keep his robes from spotting.

But it rained for forty days. Once upon a time a downpour of equal length had drowned the world, so we must suppose that the graveyard was quite awash with mud and water. Anyway, St. Swithun's poor old dripping bones were left outside until the sun came back. And the legend still persists that a prayer to Swithun fetches up a storm. If I were a merchant of overshoes and umbrellas I would paint the good saint on my sign-board snugly clothed against the weather, and put out a nobby line of cotton swithuns to draw the trade.

And now St. Dunstan shows for a moment on the lazy canvas of our dream—Dunstan who pulled the devil by his fiery nose and sat in the counsel of the Saxon kings. There are a cyclist's forty sleepy winks of Edward the Elder, of Eadgar, of Æthelred and Edmund, all of them groping in our memory's mist; and now the Danish power, held so long in check, breaks its boundaries and overflows the south. By the year ten hundred and sixteen the Saxon power is forever broken. Winchester, however, as a city most agreeable to the invaders, has become the capitol of a Danish Empire that stretches from the Bristol Channel to the most northern fiord of Scandinavia.

I remember King Cnut, the Dane, chiefly as the credulous monarch who pulled his chair down to the shore of the loud-sounding sea and ordered it to ebb. Like Glendower he could call spirits from the vasty deep, but they did not come when he did call for them. He was, however, a king of considerable strength and wisdom. Before his death he had united invader and native into a compact kingdom by putting them on an equality before the law. With him there began a period of security and peace in which the wounds of strife were healed. And Winchester, that had rewritten a Roman law for England and a Saxon law, was thus the capitol also for a Danish law.

Nor did the city decline at first with the coming of William the Conqueror. As long as he kept a close association with the land that sent him Winchester was his royal seat; for Southampton Water was a convenient shelter for his ships. But after England knew herself to be a nation and was no longer the spoil for foreign favorites and soldiers London gained the power that was lost to Winchester forever.

It was in these first years that the Norman Cathedral was built; and to-day the transepts stand almost unchanged. The long nave, also, is there in its original timbers, although it is hidden under the remodeling of William of Wykeham. The wooden beams that roof the nave above the groining were hoisted into place more than eight hun-

dred years ago and it is said they are as strong and sound as on the day when they were cut in Hempage Wood. But the crypt shows abutments of Saxon workmen in days before great William took to clouts.

To Winchester the body of King William Rufus was brought, killed while hunting in the New Forest whose peasants he had swept off to make room for deer. Presently, on our travels, we are to see the stone that marks the legendary spot and to hear our driver drone the tale to a sleepy charabanc. The body was thrown into a charcoal burner's cart, which dripped with its dirty blood all the way to Winchester, and it was buried in the cathedral without grief or honor; and shortly the great tower fell to express its indignation that such a rotten monarch should profane the holy ground.

Do you drowse? I come to the *lastly* of my sermon. It is a chapter I would skip in any other person's book.

At Winchester the first Henry lived, and a supplement of the Domesday Book gives a hint of the city's size and appearance at the beginning of the twelfth century. From six to eight thousand folk then lived in Winchester—the second city of the British Isles. There are now three times that number of inhabitants in Winchester, yet it has sunk to a market town and a hundred cities of the north throw up a denser smudge for their wage and dividend.

In this first Henry's reign Winchester still lay within its Roman plan—a cross with four gates and inclosing walls. At the west gate stood the palace, and in the southern half of the city were grouped the cathedral and the convent buildings. What is now the high street was then called Cyp Street, which springs from the same root as London Cheapside—the place of bargains. Chepstow, also, and all villages with syllables *chep* and *chip* are of this same root and confess themselves as Saxon market towns.

As the record of Henry's days concerned taxation only no mention is made of churches, but they were dotted thick on all early maps; and priesthood was the town's most flourishing profession. I fancy that every third building lifted up its hands to God and that the quiet town sounded with convent bells.

In the twelfth century, then, Winchester was still a city of almost first importance. It contained a guild of merchants, one of Knights and a guild for pilgrims' entertainment. There were streets of tanners, of butchers, of shoemakers, of mercers, of parchment makers, of clothiers, of shield makers; for in those days streets were not numbered coldly or christened like Pullman cars, but each street was called by its general occupation. At three of the gates of the city there were spitals for lepers and at the west gate five shanties were reserved for the shelter of travelers.

With the House of Anjou Winchester declined, and yet on occasion it was still a royal residence. Feasts, ceremonials, royal births and deaths, strew the record of the centuries, but it were asking too much of a weary cyclist to do more than nod upon the list and then drop off to sleep.

Roman and Celt and Saxon—
I must stretch and read no more.
Saxon and Dane and Alfred's reign!—
I must walk or else I snore.

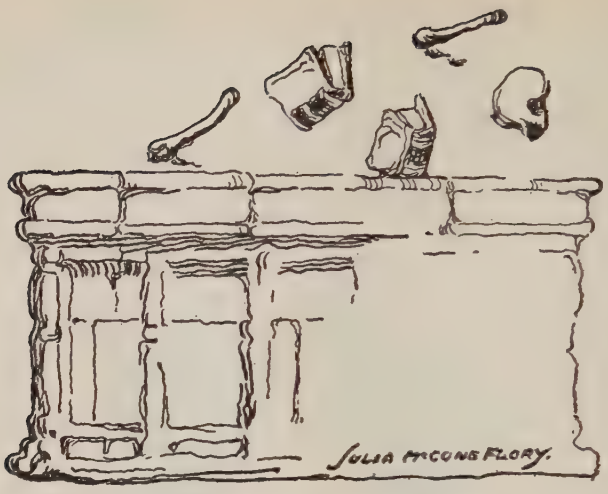
What are these names I've been reading?
My eyes are too dull to see,
And pajamas and bed for my sleepy head
Are better things to me.

Was Alfred ever bishop?
Was Dunstan once a king?
Did a Viking ship up the Itchen slip?
And what did the Romans bring?

Was it William the first or the second
Who sailed from his Norman shore?
Was it William the Red who was shot in the head?
I've forgotten these things and more.

Did ever the Dane take the city?
If so I forget the date.
I could thumb and turn and a few facts learn
But for this it grows too late.

My brain is very sleepy.
I nod till I bump my chin.
Sans collar and pants to bed I'll dance
And smother myself within.



I bury St. Swithun's dripping bones.

CHAPTER XII

I UNGUM THE SCHOLAR'S WHISKERS

HAVING cribbed the preceding chapter from the episcopal pages of the Reverend G. W. Kitchin, DD., F. S. A., I may now sink to my natural self and expose here and there a bit of honest ignorance. I ungum the scholar's long gray whiskers. I bury St. Swithun's dripping bones and henceforth follow a prosy path. Something had happened to Gingerale's starboard ear. He had left Cleveland two weeks before with a cold sniffling in his head and from this a deafness had developed. At first we had thought it sham and had remarked that his malady showed worse at any hint of bedtime, for it is chronic to

his age to hide from this unwelcome assault behind the buttress of a faulty ear. But his hearing did not mend. It grew worse until a great pound of peppermints might have shouted in their unheeding porches.

A doctor in London who cures dukes and sickly countesses had gazed profoundly down the offending crater and had christened the complaint in Latin, but the trouble had not been healed by his swab and lotion. On a turn of the highroad near New Alresford, that was as slippery as noodles on a spoon, Gingerale was nearly hit by a motor that crept upon him unaware, and therefore it seemed best to ignore the cathedral until his hearing could be mended.

We put the problem to our hostess of the George. Too often these women who sit at the wicket of an English inn are sour creatures who drip a pickled answer to a question, but the George is better managed. Our hostess was sympathetic to our trouble. She linked the lad's arm in hers as if she had grandchildren of her own and counseled us to turn up the High Street to the west gate, whence by climbing to the left we would come on the Hampshire County Hospital. There had been a time when a dozen shrines just around the corner would have worked the cure for a pilgrim's penny, but Swithun's bones have fallen to disrepute and we climbed the hill as she directed.

I sat outside on a plot of grass and sniffed the

disinfectants that soiled the air. It is a smell that quite persuades me that I have myself a dozen ailments and am ready for a coffin and a pink pillow. A man was mowing the lawn and his rival surgery played the deuce with a pretty crop of daisies. Gingerale was out again in less than half an hour. Medicine had been squirted up his nose to take the ear by an unguarded postern, and convalescence had commenced. Within two days no smallest gumdrop could whisper without detection, and even soap and bedtime echoed distressfully in the noisy cavern.

Nor would the doctor take a fee. It was a bit in return for the comfort of seeing the American troops arrive in nineteen seventeen.

It still lacked a few minutes of noon and we turned into the law courts outside the west gate. The great hall was built by Henry the Third in the thirteenth century and is roofed handsomely in oak. Under a mild shadow of colored glass it must have been a splendid room; but it is bare and cold now in a white light, like so much of our Early English since the eighth Henry's wives and Cromwell's horses destroyed the gorgeous windows of Roman ritual.

Suspended at one end is a large wooden disk that is said to be King Arthur's round table. I take these legends with an easy credence and find myself at one with Thomas Fuller. Such tales, he wrote, are laid "at such a distance, they

are cheaper credited than confuted." We are to run on these relics of King Arthur in several towns and districts. Winchester is but one of many towns which thinks it is Camelot; for it is a stupid tower of a stupid town, here in the west of England, that boasts of no lineage from these golden days. Nor can one quarrel with the repetition of a legend that sends through his memory the pleasant lines of Tennyson and Malory.

Yet Camelot, to satisfy the fancy, should be pitched more sharply on the hills. The walls should cling to the dizzy rock like the shining castle of a dream and its glittering spires should trip the running stars. It is my whim that sets Camelot on the Cornish coast beyond Tintagel where the rugged coast resists the ocean—man's last stronghold to the west. Here on a barren crag that is blinded by fog and wind a ruin of tumbled stones shows that once a building rose above the sea. Sheep nibble at the grass all day and rest in the hollows of the rock, but towers rise up at night and flourish in ancient magic till the dawn.

Be the truth what it may, it is a fine old table and if Arthur himself never tucked his silken legs beneath it, certainly it must have groaned for other and hungrier kings. The disk is marked from center to rim with bands of alternate color like a gambler's wheel. Is it possible that King Arthur set the table on a massive pin and spun it round? *Faites vos jeus, messieurs! Rien va plus!*

If London could be coaxed here was a fortune surer than the tax of Domesday Book.

May we suggest that our cherished primitives laid their shining fortune on the black and red —Launcelot and Elaine, Geraint and Enid, with their chips and noses on the cloth? Why is Malory silent of these diversions in gorgeous Camelot? Did the widow of careful Windsor lay a hush on Tennyson lest the fashion spread to soil the purity of Balmoral? I fancy John Brown in kilts as croupier. I would exchange a dozen jousts with knights in armor, the storming of a hundred castles, for a plain narrative of some such happy evening with its rattle of merry chips.

"Faites vos jeux, messieurs!"

The custodian was concerned lest we doubt the authenticity of King Arthur's table; and finally we met him half way and agreed that if there had ever been a King Arthur and he had lived in Winchester and owned a table, it is likely that this was it.

Above the west gate is a museum. There is a chest of ancient city documents, a suit of chains for criminals, Charles the First's riding boots sadly

in need of grease and tapping, a few fittings from a Viking ship—an agreeable assortment of junk that is worth an hour.

The porter was a jolly fellow with a gift of ventriloquism. He lifted a trap door in the floor to what was once a prison cell and exchanged greetings with an imaginary Joe who was confined within. Then he called up the chimney to George to toss him down a penny, which presently appeared inside his hat. We supplied the penny. At this he hinted that the trick was done twice as well with a shilling, and his humor was worth the price. But when he suggested that Tom inside the ancient chest might dislodge a half crown he roused our Scotch. Gingerale stared at his antics, half wishing to believe, yet with suspicion that here was another Santa Claus to be exposed.

From the top of the gate there is an extensive view of Winchester and the country roundabout, and we sat on the battlements for a fine hour while the porter's humorous finger pointed out the towers and buildings. It was through Winchester that many of our American troops passed in nineteen seventeen on their way to France, and he showed us the hills and valleys where they had been encamped. St. Catherine's then was thick with canvas tents where two thousand years before the first Romans had placed a fort, and yet the older trenches show more plainly. The Americans have come and gone, leaving hardly any trace; as if

some larger Barnum had struck his tents and packed his elephants. It may have been repayment merely for our shilling, but the porter told us that our troops had been great favorites and that the town had boomed with our easy dollars.

Nor did he lack anecdote. It seems that for many centuries there had hung from a peg inside the cathedral a mighty key which legend reported had once unlocked the door of an earlier Saxon church. It was a massive weight of metal and a good foot long—worthy of Peter and the exacting gate of heaven—and since the Norman Conquest it had been undisturbed.

But one day when the American troops were encamped at Winchester it disappeared. I fancy it was a verger on his peaceful morning round who discovered it was missing from its usual peg. He looked again, lest his poor old eyes were up to tricks. Then in an excited whisper he spread the theft, till vergers, choristers, curates, organist and deacons were gathered at the sacrilege. Presently the Norman arches so clamored at the loss that the Bishop himself, with buttons all awry, came upon a trot with fat legs twinkling in amazement. I do not know how such things are managed in these high circles but I suspect that the whole ecclesiastical family now sat in conference and that the American army was addressed under a mighty seal. Had the cathedral itself, like Aladdin's enchanted palace, disappeared from its accustomed site, Swithun's bones

and all, the excitement could not have been more shrill.

The American army, man by man, was questioned by its officers, and company after company was lined up to be told the loss, but the key was not discovered. Pershing was notified and Washington, and back came word from the Secretary of War himself that the precious key must be restored, that the bags of every unit must be searched before it entrained for France. And at last the key was found. A doughboy with a zest for souvenirs had stuffed it in his trousers' leg. It was a foretaste of a German helmet. And so, our porter ended, the key was hung again upon its Saxon peg with display of ceremonial; where it is likely to hang undisturbed for another thousand years.

It was about this time when the key was lost that a choir from a negro company sang in the cathedral for the entertainment of the army. I do not know whether their program was jazz or hymn, but not since Dunstan's day had there been heard so odd a service. Swithun must have wriggled a bit and flopped over on his marble stomach.

I now inquired for a barber and was directed to a hairdresser which seemed an insult to my breeches. Nothing arouses our American pride—unless it be our tall buildings, our heavy locomotives, our baggage checks and our exposed plumbing (super-products of our culture)—nothing rouses our pride more than our barbers' chairs. It is on

a kind of lazy throne that we are turned and tilted. It is a royal day bed for a quiet nap, and is often placed behind a great glass window in the view of admiring shoppers, so that common bearded folk upon the curb may see a revived and decadent glory that was Rome. In England, on the contrary, the shaggy aspirant for beauty sits obscurely on what is no better than a kitchen chair, and his neck is the hinge that lets the barber underneath his chin.

Lunch, a nap and then the cathedral! My most enduring remembrance of this amazing building is the first sight of it as I turned into the close from the High Street. Its grey walls and tower rise above the trees in lasting prayer from the ages that are gone. The Norman crossing, the stones of the foundation as they pierced the flooring of the crypt, a delicate fragment of early cloister wall, the general range inside from west to east—these things I remember best. There was service as we entered and the voices sounded through the singing vaults like an echo from the centuries when religion was a vivid force despite its dogma and a priest was the premier's equal. But now one feels that the holy crew that man a church out-proportions the passengers it carries.

English cathedrals, as a rule, are narrower and longer than the French. This narrowness produces a lighter thrust and consequently they are without the flying buttresses that are so distinc-

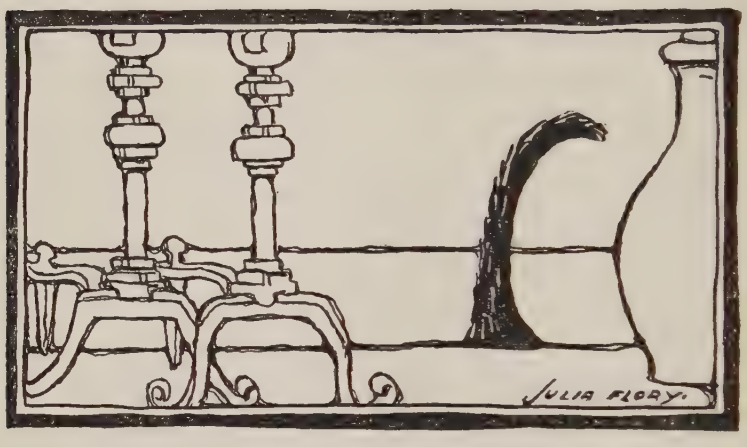
tive of the Isle de France. They also rest on stouter walls without the effect of shaft and balance, and they do not fall so entirely within a narrow Gothic definition. Yet it would be the toss of a coin whether Winchester, except for its colder glass and thrift of carving, is not a fair rival of Rheims or Chartres.

A verger with faded eyesight, who had been a stone mason as long as his eyes permitted, led us through the sights. It was time that he went home for supper but he good-naturedly gave us a hungry hour. Nor did he drone in weary monotone. Once, by a slip, he spoke of a crypt that was "overneath" the pavement. He chuckled at his mistake and remarked that he would tell his wife at supper, so that they might laugh together; and it seemed a glimpse into a happy family. Presently, warmed by our enthusiasm, he took us to the choir to show us a piece of stone that he himself had carved to replace one that was worn by time. And this was as it should be —another hint of older times when those who lived in the service of the convent were themselves the artisans who reared the walls and worked with loving chisel.

At a shop that fronts upon the close we had a cup of tea with strawberries and clotted cream. This clotted cream is made, I am told, by a slow simmering and skimming off; but the magic is confined to southwest England. It was a testa-

ment to the local cow to see with what quick excitement the Tweedledums spooned it in.

My friend, Captain F——, had been quartered in Winchester in nineteen eighteen and he had asked me to convey his regards to a certain secondhand dealer of furniture and brass near the



The black cat . . . must have gone to take the air.

entrance of the close who had once opened in his sitting room a bottle of excellent Burgundy for their common health and comfort. I would know the place, he said, by a black cat that slept in the window among tarnished andirons. But secondhand shops were too plentiful and the black cat, if it still lived, must have gone to take the air.

Winchester School was next. It is one of the famous public schools of England which means,

as we understand the term, that it is not at all a public school but a thoroughly private school for the sons of gentlemen. It is the grade school of England that parallels our public school, yet I am told they hardly match to ours and that a grade school graduate carries the mark of his inferior instruction.

To get the history of Winchester school one must dig again among early bones. Shall I crib once more? I reserve decision until the following chapter.

Fattening fruits of learning.

CHAPTER XIII

WHEREIN THE READER IS SAVED FROM MUCH WEARY INSTRUCTION

FOR four long nights I have sat with a stout volume crammed with dates and other fattening fruits of learning, but I would spare the reader the contagion of my yawn. Let it suffice that Winchester School is old and beautiful, that many famous men have been birched within its walls, that scholars and statesmen have worn its stones and eaten from its wooden trenchers. "Manners Maketh the Man" is its golden motto. I bow and kiss my hand—hail and farewell!—to its thousand years of study.

Where Mr. Harding watched the welfare of his broken friends.

CHAPTER XIV

ST. CROSS BY THE WAY

THE following morning we were late to make a start. Three days in the saddle and another day of sights had aged me considerably, nor did my companions frolic through their breakfast. I remember, except for the Green Feather whose good nature remained unruffled, a general snapping at our bacon.

Every one of us had an errand—a few more postal cards, a tube of tooth paste, a luggage strap, a broken pedal to be mended. For an hour a changing three of us chafed to start if the fourth would come, then another melted off as the fourth appeared; for it takes a stout captain to hold the ranks against desertion. The bags of extra cloth-

ing had been repacked and given to the porter to be sent to Lyndhurst where we planned to come some five days hence. It was nearly noon when at last we strapped the luggage to our wheels and threw down our silver offering.

We started stiffly. You may have seen, dear one, a trick bear mount his bicycle in the circus. Concentrate for a moment on the picture—hind paws fumbling for the pedals (a serious and painful business)—stomach resting on the shaft—a look in his eye mingled of nursery and ferocious jungle. C'est moi, chérie! Out through the west gate we pedaled on the Roman road toward Southampton.

St. Cross is a bare mile beyond the walls of Southampton. It lies not on the main road but on a lane that trickles with smaller traffic from the west. There is a transitional church with gaudy painted walls and a famous almshouse that seems the very building where Mr. Harding watched the welfare of his broken friends. Old men sit nodding on the steps and a row of single chimneys sends us faint smoke like the breath of their fading lives. In every crooked figure that treads the gravel paths one sees his acquaintance of Barchester; and it is at St. Cross, even more vividly than at Salisbury, that these pleasant volumes reveal themselves.

Trollope, despite his hundred novels more or less (those in the usual set are but a fragment of the whole)—Trollope was a writer by avocation. Until

his fame and livelihood were sure, his books filled but the chinks of a life whose routine was spent in England's postal service; for he was an agent of the government and traveled here and there to satisfy complaints in the carriage of letters. His early stories were written mostly in coaches as he journeyed and no other author has written so many novels on his knee. Later he came down to London and went on a round of dinners among men of fame and fashion, and Thackeray engaged his pen for the new Cornhill Magazine; but this was long after Barchester was written.

Trollope has been ridiculed for forcing himself to write a given number of pages every day. It was a regimen first enforced by poverty and must have descended from his mother who was, also, a novelist scribbling feverishly to raise her family and ward off destitution. His industry is at a least a text against the self-indulgence of lazy temperament.

Trollope's Autobiography, even with an occasional crabbedness of temper, is one of the great books of its kind. And if one would wish acquaintance with a saint of modern life he must read those parts of the book in which he writes of his mother and her struggle with poverty and disease. Her journey to America, her bazaar in Cincinnati to recruit her fortune, are recounted in her famous book of travel; but that is but a brief chapter of her devotion to her family. An invalid husband, three children dying of tuberculosis, hard hours of nurs-

ing, a destitution kept at bay by the writing of novels at night or in the early hours of morning when her family slept—these were the life of Trollope's mother, until in her later age her famous son could give her rest and comfort.

Trollope recalls in his autobiography a midsummer night that he spent once in Salisbury when the plan of Barchester first came to him. He was loitering in the cathedral close and these persons of his brain arose from the shadows of the church. "I have been often asked" he writes, "in what period of my early life I had lived so long in a cathedral city as to become intimate with the ways of a Close. I never lived in any cathedral city," he continues, "—except London, never knew anything of any Close, and at that time had enjoyed no peculiar intimacy with any clergyman."

In the great hall of St. Cross almshouse the pensioners eat in common, and from a fireplace on the stones in the middle of the room the smoke still escapes through an opening in the roof. Against rain an open cupola is clapped on above. And in our own country, three thousand miles from its first necessity, stand barns with similar cupolas as in the days when chimneys were rare and these vents smoked with the fires of supper. For the forms of architecture outlast so long their use. One may remark how a modern wooden lintel is painted with a keystone, how a useless pilaster is only nailed against a wall. A buttress pretends to catch a life-

less thrust and idle beams hang as parasites against the ceiling. After a trip through Europe one may wander up his street at home and remark these fossils of the older centuries.

We sat at the crossroads in debate whether St. Cross were worth the time and effort; but the coin turned up its lazy face and we pedaled south.

At Otterbourne we lay in the grass beside the the road. A wayside cup foamed in my sizzling gullet. A village or so, and now by the thickening houses we are entering the great city of Southampton. There were broad well kept streets and the city pitched down hill so easily that tired cyclists could coast almost from the suburbs to the wharves. But presently we learned that the coal strike had lamed the traffic and that the first boat for Cowes put off at dinner time. We therefore checked our bicycles at the landing and looked about for a place to eat.

Our restaurant showed a whited front but was foul inside. The wash room with its last week's towel should have followed its own instruction and used the soap upon itself. Like Ophelia's ungracious pastor it did but show the thorny way to heaven and trod itself the dirty path of dalliance. Our lunch—I write with restraint—was sour and mussy. I think I once had a more spotted meal at the Empire House in Akron before the days of the city's present splendor—a hotel that smelled offensively of disinfectants, which it used like strong

We confess a weakness for ruins.

perfume instead of soap; until finally the building rotted and fell apart. But it was the dirtiest cloth we had in England.

There were three hours yet to boat time, so we engaged a motor and rode to Netley Abbey which stands five miles outside the city. We passed several cyclists, equal wretches to ourselves, but, like beggars come to fortune, we stuck out our tongues at them.

Netley Abbey lies close to Southampton Water but is masked by a grove of trees, so that the steamers from New York are lost. A footpath leads from the motor road for a hundred feet or so, and once around the turn we changed our century. Any whistle from the channel calls vainly to a forgotten world.

We confess a weakness for ruins. We may regret that Netley stands broken to the sky and our eye may grieve at columns whose purposes are shattered, but in our hearts we know that the remnant, like the leaves of Sibyl, is greater than the whole. For abbeys like Netley find their sharpest interest not so much in their beauty of line and decoration or even in the fashion with which nature reclaims their ruin, as in the spur they give our fancy to rebuild the life that once walked beneath their fallen vaults. Trim perfect walls could hold us no such invitation to construct the past. It is a century that spoke with foreign thought, its strife headed to a different end and

its piety does not trot with ours; yet here are the very stones worn in procession down to supper, here are the ovens that cooked a mightier race of beef, here are the gardens where crops were reaped, and walls that listened once to prayer and scandal, to sorrow and to laughter.

There is something of the curious housewife in all of us. We like to see how people really live and to observe the intimate contrivance of their daily habits. We peep about these ruins with a zest that we might apply to a neighbor's window. When God made the tree he contrived the knot hole for our gossip and satisfaction. There is a poem of Browning about a house with its front knocked off and its rooms bare against the street.

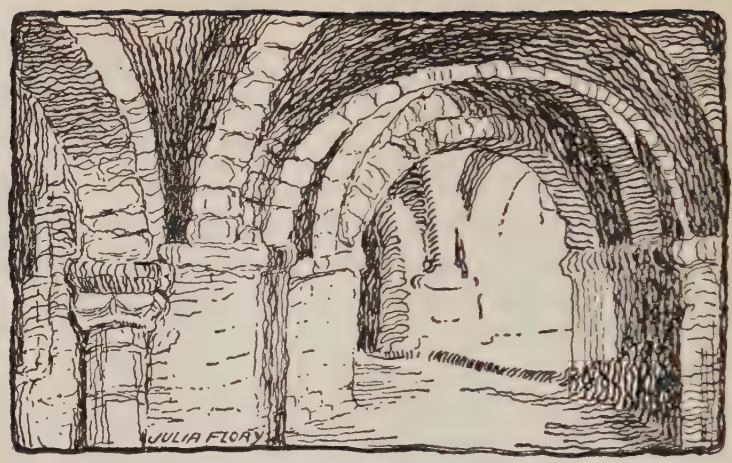
"The owner? Oh, he had been crushed, no doubt!
'Odd tables and chairs for a man of wealth!
What a parcel of musty old books about!
He smoked,—no wonder he lost his health!'"

It piques our interest and if that house stood just around the corner the most incurious of us would pause a bit in passing. For myself, when lately a new subway in New York devastated a path among the crowded buildings of Greenwich Village, I frequently walked there to see how it cut its way through hall and bedroom. Suspended dizzily among the wreckage was a fragment of a parlor with scarcely its chairs removed, its wall paper still unfaded where a picture had been hung, a mantel

where books and clock had stood. And this was but a life vilely in the present, without the softening glamor of long centuries to tint it with romantic color.

But a broken abbey is a fair museum where the eye of fancy may see the running of the older world and observe how men once lived. Time has lifted off the roof for a present pilgrim's ease. It has knocked out a flooring to expose a cellar, and it throws a ray of sunlight to be our candle on the stairs. That tower with circling steps, once encased in gloom, is split open for our convenience, so that its procession of midnight mass may climb in our lazy eye. We may explore the kitchen and wander through monkish cells without tapping for admittance. And Time at last briefly stays its devastation to be our teacher of the past.

Several years ago I read Jessopp's Coming of the Friars and, in particular, a chapter in which he portrays the circumstance of monastic living. *Pecavi!* Again my thieving hand has reached inside the pocket of a scholar.



CHAPTER XV

THE POCKET OF A SCHOLAR

WHEN Henry the Eighth suppressed the monasteries an institution ended that had existed in England for more than a thousand years and the mind is thrown back to the midnight of the middle ages when England was still a Roman province. Protestantism, if it be merely time that counts, is but a brief newfashioned habit of less than four hundred years. A hoop skirt might persist so long.

Monastery is a misnomer. By its origin it should mean the dwelling place of a solitary person, one living in seclusion like John the Baptist, but in time it came to mean the abode of a corporate body where solitude was impossible and even privacy infrequent. And a monastery signifies a build-

ing or group of buildings, whereas a convent refers to those men or women who convene and live within. And a convent is never a building as we so often loosely use the word.

It was inevitable in the rougher centuries that men and women of gentler nature should seek retirement from the world. At inception, the monastery, in spirit and letter, was a retreat, frankly, from the battle of the world. It was not a monk's duty to reform mankind. His task was solely to save himself from the wrath to come. Monasteries were not primarily benevolent. They existed for the welfare of their members, and without that help for others which is the essence of Christianity. These great houses did in time become centers dispensing the warmth and comfort of civilization, but this was not the first draft of their intention.

The first Benedictine monastery held its convent on Monte Cassino, and from this germ the practice spread through Europe where for four hundred years all convents lived with more or less fidelity by its celebrated rule. But as the centuries rolled by abuses of wealth and laxity crept in, the old austerity softened with the ambitions, the pleasure and the vices of the world. Scholarship, too, however to be commended in itself, gave itself to barren disquisition—whether seven saints by miracle could stand on a needle's point. About one hundred and fifty years before the Norman Conquest monastic life was a nest that often bred corrup-

tion. In this dubious state a band of monks at Cluny undertook to clean their practice and return to primitive ideals.

But Time dulls the fine edge of continued resolution, and so in the running of the years the sharpness of this reform wore smooth and offered place for other reformations. One of the first of these was that of an Englishman by name of Stephen Harding who became Abbot of Citeaux. St. Bernard was his disciple and their work was the Cistercian order.

At the beginning, therefore, of the thirteenth century there were in England three great orders of monks—the original Benedictines who had been rich and scholarly and powerful for centuries and were a bit scornful perhaps of upstart rivals, the Cluniacs who were the reformed Benedictines, and the Cistercians who reformed them both. There was also, of course, the order of friars who had followed St. Francis into poverty. These friars lived in the larger cities where they ministered to the wretchedness of such overcrowded districts as Whitefriars and Blackfriars. Their convent did not retreat from the battle of life but shared eagerly its poverty and squalor, and our charitable settlements to-day that live close quartered with the poor, must be of their ancient lineage. But Netley and Tintern, Melrose and Fountains were Cistercian, the order of white monks, and were out of the range and contagion of the infected cities.

The first requisite of the Cistercian order was a church. Where a man's heart is, there will his treasure be; and consequently these churches were of splendid size and decoration—glass unrivaled by future ages, vestments of fine linen, embroidery of amazing delicacy, stone and wood carved in lace-like patterns. Here were placed the relics that were valued above jewels and gold—nails of the sacred cross, thorns, fragments and splinters of consecrated memory. And if these were a cheat, it was a pious well-intentioned fraud; for they were thought to heal men's souls. Too sharp a scorn shows only our ignorance of the beauty, the mysticism and the vital ritual of the thirteenth century.

It will help our understanding of the medieval church to know that in part their buildings were erected not as now by outside contract and indifferent employment, but by the monks themselves and those who were in residence. The work was local to the convent and to the neighborhood. And this was done, at least in favored periods, with a whole heart upon a task that glorified them to God. The stones, the timbers, the glass mosaics, were set by those who must see them daily, and the building was vital to themselves—an individual expression of the convent's aspiration.

The craftsmanship that prospered in this genial circumstance has long since disappeared under the iron use of machinery and the specialized and narrow impersonality of labor. A workman may no

longer point proudly to a bit of carving on shaft and finial and claim it for his own.

That much of this monastic construction, however, was imperfect in pure mechanics is shown by ancient records—how a tower fell in a winter storm, how a roof caved in, how a buttress was needed here or there to catch an unexpected thrust. It is said that gothic buildings never sleep, that their parts are always tugging to be loose; and so there was a constant tinkering through the centuries.

The church was commonly cruciform and its choir headed to the east, for there lay Jerusalem where good men's thoughts were truant pilgrims. Ten thousand churches with pointing altars, like a vast and scattered constellation of Christmas stars, told the wise men of the west where lay the holy cradle of our Lord. The choir was reserved for the worship and attendance of the monks, but the nave was open to laymen, servants, workers and casual visitors. How large a part of the service ministered especially to the convent is shown by the relative length of the English choir which is scarcely out-distanced by the nave.

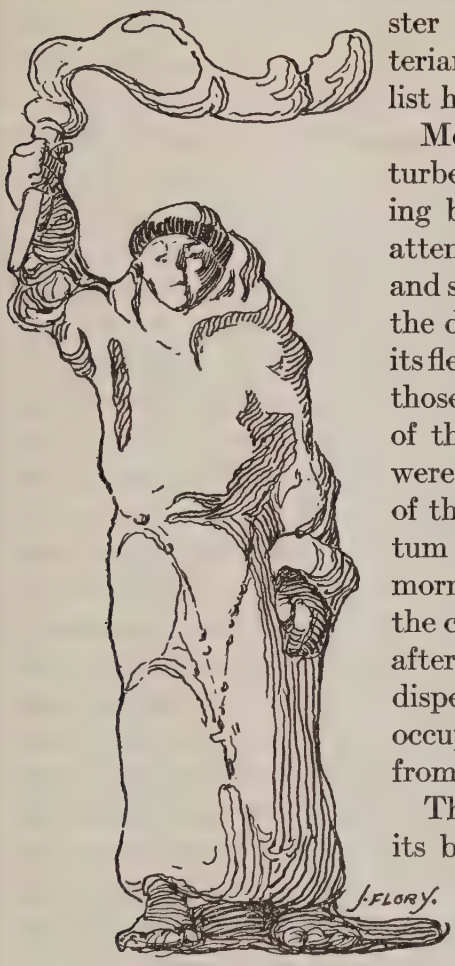
Next to express the essence of a monastery was the cloister, a great quadrangle secured by walls from secular contact. It lay usually to the south of the church so as to be shielded from northern storm and open to the sun. It was the monks' living place, and its covered arcades were trellised

with stone for decoration and protection. Seats were built along the walls and pious carvings of the deeds of saints were a pattern to inspire an hour of rest. Here books were read or printed, prayers were studied, music was copied and hose were darned.

In the chapter house the convent held its councils. In the refectory its members ate, with sometimes a monk to read aloud a chapter of the holy fathers, in order that the brain and heart might sit as equal partners with the stomach. The dormitory was arranged with beds as in the public wards of our hospitals today, although occasionally a half partition made cubicles of doubtful privacy. Beneath there was commonly a vaulted chamber where monks were bled monthly to subdue the flesh. Beyond the dormitory were the latrines or washing places which were open to the air. There was a cellarer's hall with vaults below, the kitchener's offices—chequers, they were called—with useful smoky chimneys. There were sometimes guest rooms for travelers—for inns were scarce—an infirmary, a scriptorium for the writing of records and accounts. Here manuscripts were illuminated, but chiefly the monks were busy with payments on lease or rental of convent land. Here they made schoolbooks for the instruction of novices and copied music for the service. There was never a room for books, for no flight of fancy could conceive so numerous a collection. And in

some of the larger monasteries there were other rooms—a calefactory, which was a sitting room for convalescents with artificial heat, and a locutory in which vistors might converse with members of the convent through a grille.

The head of one of these greater convents was the abbot who ruled supremely except for God and bishop. The abbot's authority often extended over subsidiary convents which were called cells or priories. Of these cells priors held a delegated rule. In England all Cluniac convents were priories of the abbey of Cluny, but the Cistercian convents were independent of the parent house at Citeaux. The abbot had his separate residence within the monastery and his own estate and fees to sustain his expense. Next below him was his prior who was steward of his authority. There followed a long hierarchy of obedientiaries. The manciple provided wine and mead, the earthenware and lamps and oil. The precentor looked to the ink, to the coloring for the illumination of manuscripts, to the material for bookbinding, to the upkeep of the organ. Clothing for the monks fell to the devices of the chamberlain. To the kitchener, beyond his expected duty, was left the accounting of tenants who paid their rents in fowl and eggs, salmon, herring and garden crops. There was a sacrist who copied music. And a pitanciar did something—I cannot find what; for Jessopp gives him but a gesture, and Noah Web-



At six each morning.

ster (doubtless a Presbyterian) neglects even to list him in the language.

Monastic ease was disturbed at six each morning by a bell for general attendance at early mass and six other services kept the day from brooding on its fleas. Lay brothers and those held to the labor of the fields and kitchen were excused from much of this attendance. Mixtum or breakfast followed morning mass and then the convent sat in council, after which the monks dispersed to their many occupations. I shall quote from Jessopp.

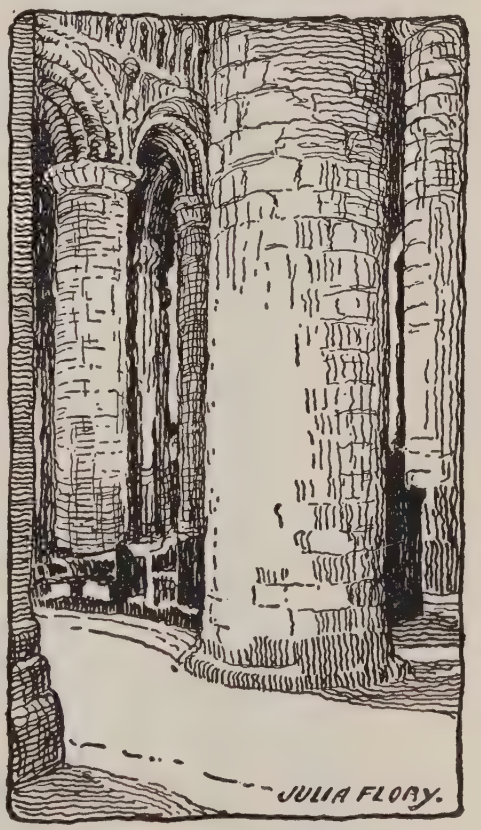
The convent went about its business—"the kitchener to arrange for the meals, and not unfrequently to provide hospitality for distinguished guests and their retinue; the precentor to drill his choir boys, to tune the organ, to look after the music, or to arrange for some procession in

the church . . . the infirmarer to take his rounds in the hospital; the cellarer to inspect the brew-house and bakeries. . . . Meanwhile in the cloister all was stir and movement without noise. In the west alley the schoolmaster was teaching his little pupils the rudiments of Latin, or it might be the elements of singing; in the south alley, where the light was best, a monk with a taste for art was trying his hand at illuminating a Ms. or rubricating the initial letters; while on the other side, in the north alley, some were painfully getting by heart the psalms, or practicing meditation—alone in a crowd. . . . Outside the cloister, though yet within the precincts, it is difficult for us now to realize what a vast hive of industry a great monastery in some of the lonely and thinly-populated parts of England was. Everything that was eaten or drunk or worn, almost everything that was made or used in the monastery, was produced upon the spot. The grain grew on their own land; the corn was ground in their own mill; their clothes were made from the wool of their own sheep; they had their own tailors and shoemakers, and carpenters and blacksmiths, almost within call; they kept their own bees; they grew their own garden-stuff and their own fruit; I suspect they knew more of fish-culture than, until lately, we moderns could boast of knowing. Nay, they had their own vineyards and made their own wine."

So much for Jessopp. I shall take my hand

from his pocket and bungle along a bit without his help.

These Cistercians, the order of the white monks, had sharp eyes for a pleasant site. They left to the friars the wretchedness of cities and took to the cleaner tillage of the soil. Wherever in England you come on a valley that is greener than its fellows and is caught in the fold of fertile hills, wherever you find a stream that lingers in generous shade, wherever the world lies in softer prospect, it is there you may expect to find their ruined walls.

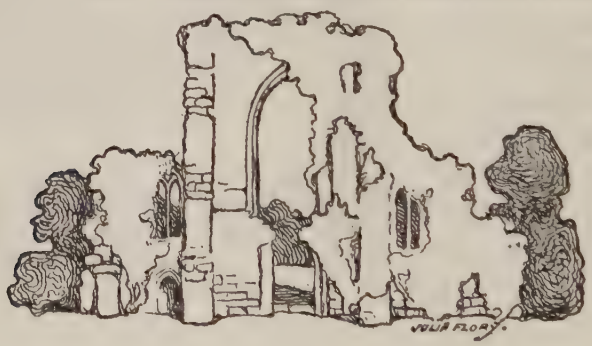


Here men . . . lived in the easy current of salvation.

A lack of care enhances Netley's beauty but threatens its total demolition. Shrubs and grasses flourish on the broken arches, flowers wave in the sun-

light of a shattered column top, ivy overgrows the walls and its shrewd fingers pry at the stones to throw them into utter ruin. The cloisters are a tumbled heap and in a quiet meadow are the footings of a chapel whose upper stones are gone. Time, like a careful housewife, has swept the litter.

We sat for an hour within the open nave on a rich flooring of grass and daisies. Down that flight of unroofed steps the procession of midnight mass came with flaring torch, and its ghostly shadow moved upon the walls. These vaults, now fallen into rubble, once shook with song, till every rib and boss lifted up its voice to God. In this cellar, now open to the sky, a great tun once flowed from a merry spigot and wooden cups clattered on the board till tongues were loose. Here men agonized their souls to heaven or lived in the easy current of salvation. All hoods, it is said, make not monks; and yet, for every generation touched by scandal, a dozen generations kept their faith, it is likely, in decent living. And for a man whose mind was tuned to the limits of the century it was a peaceful life with heaven at the end.



A cramped sardine among us larger fish.

CHAPTER XVI

AND SO TO BED

IT was late in the afternoon when we piled our bicycles on the forward deck of the packet and set sail for the Isle of Wight. The boat was crowded and we made the journey huddled on a crate of merchandise. Gingerale sat as thin as a cramped sardine among us larger fish.

We scanned the shore for a sight of Netley but it was lost among the trees. Across the channel lay the low line of the New Forest where shortly we are to travel. We had telegraphed to the Gloster Hotel at Cowes for accommodation. This stands

on the esplanade and our rooms looked across Southampton Water where sailing craft were moored. Gulls played puss in corner from spile to spile.

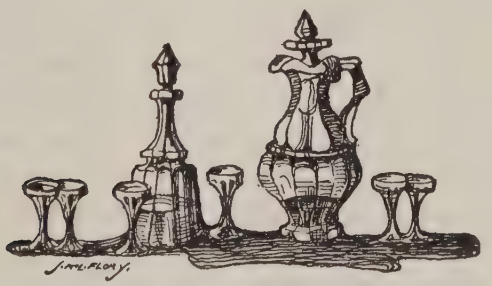
Cowes, I fancy, sleeps all winter, but in season it is a busy place and nearly every building on the water front is a hotel or boarding house, with signs hanging in the windows that here are rooms with an ocean view; and by broad definition a window has an ocean view if a lodger can periscope himself across the sill and get any slanting glimpse of water between the buildings. Accidents, no doubt, are common among eager tourists who lean too far and lose their grip. The town is tripperish, of course, but it is spared the pest of a bathing beach with its thousand pair of legs, and Apollos burying fat Venuses in the sand. It is rather an honest town, I think, where sailor folk gather to talk the gossip of the sea and to cruise along the coast.

We were waiting for our dinner when a gentleman in sailor cap asked us if we knew Mr. W—— M—— of Cleveland, for he had seen our residence on the hotel register. Our new acquaintance proved to be a lumberman of London—something rather wholesale, for he spoke of broad acreage—mahogany, which is a cut above all other wood—and he was planning to sail at midnight in his yacht for a three week's cruise along the coast. He was a fine upstanding man of perhaps six feet three who might fittingly have been an

admiral—of seventy years or more, but with the figure of an athlete and a courtesy that would become a prince. Presently he invited us to join him and his companions at ten o'clock in the smoke room to drink to his departure.

We spent the early evening on the esplanade among unembarrassed lovers. Then, when it was barely twilight, we kept our engagement.

There were four of them, old cronies whose sons and daughters seemed generally linked in marriage. And for thirty years, with scarcely a break, they had cruised together. Our host called for glasses and poured us Scotch, then with a courtly gesture he named his American friend. There was no word of the friendship between our two countries, yet the toast implied it; and secretly I pledged our national accord. The four old sailor men now pointed to the lights of their yacht and took their leave of us. Presently their lantern moved upon the water and we went to bed.



With a half-crown itching in his fingers.

CHAPTER XVII

ACROSS THE ISLE OF WIGHT

GINGERALE is a mighty collector of stamps and looks on a town as good if it offers him his favorite wares. He had seen such a shop on his rambles of last night and therefore he gulped his breakfast and set out at a brisk trot with a half crown itching in his fingers. It was Sunday morning but he roused the merchant by clicking his money on the window. He was back presently with less jingle of silver but with a stamp or so that was quite rare—a per-

foration more or less than common. We packed and started.

Our destination for the day was Shanklin, which lies across the island, and we were to see Carisbrooke Castle on the way. The harbor of Cowes was astir with sailing boats, and launches ran busily here and there in defiance of Sunday sermons and snorted their contempt for any indoor golden text. On the wharves many sailors sat in the shade of their bushy whiskers and smoked their pipes in a vile smudge of incense to the heathen god that rules the sea.

There was an ugly hill at leaving the town which discouraged even our lowest gear and then we followed an upland road of extensive prospect for several miles until Newport came in sight. We coasted into the village, which seems a port by courtesy, yet the tide lifts in vessels of fair size. Ancient ports were seldom built on open harbors, and this was partly for fear of pirates. One has only to study the map of Europe and remark how far inland these older towns set themselves, from Paris and London down, to learn what an actual menace these picturesque old brigands were. It was the use of coal and a consequent need of putting into port to refill the bunkers that plucked their fearful beards and drove them from the ocean to the nursery. Washed clean of sin, they spend a happy immortality in the company of children, and they cruise now no farther than the twilight

of the hall and attic. But perhaps at Newport there was once a greater depth of water, for even in historic times the subsidence of the English Channel has left several of its ports quite blocked by sand and severed from the ocean.

Carisbrooke is at the top of a hill outside the town. But we were to see it only from a point outside the walls and moat, as the porter had locked the gate and gone to church; and for a moment we condemned the pious fellow for preferring his immortal soul to our convenience. By lying flat, however, on our stomachs we could see under the gate into what seemed to be a kind of courtyard, but we fouled our clothing and the view point, although interesting and unusual, affords scanty material for description.

We rode several times around the castle walls but were denied the miracle of Jericho, so we lay for a bit of rest on the slope of the hill with a wide country below us to the south. We were always, I must confess,—when we were not eating—always lying on our elbows, always nodding off to sleep. A dog came up and wagged his tail at us; so, not to be churlish, we threw sticks for his amusement. I look confidently on a dog that wags a democratic tail and again commend the breed that oscillates most vigorously from stem to stern. Then the friendly birds came round, tilted their heads in curiosity and chirped us to forgetfulness.

It was in the tower above us where signal

lanterns once warned the island that the Spanish Armada stood off the Solent.

My map shows the towns of Blackwater, Godshill and Sandford. I remember only Godshill, for we had tea there and mighty slabs of beef. Many wasps sat on the lip of the pickled walnut jar and climbed in and out like happy angels on Jacob's ladder. It is hard for a stranger to eat in peace when a dozen of these creatures circle round and look for a landing place upon his nose. He thinks them to be malicious rascals, until in time he admits their innocence and allows them to dine from his common plate. There was a snug garden behind the inn, but it was set for grander folk who came by motor and our hostess stiffened at our dusty clothing and served us in the dining room.

Our road now lay through an open rolling country of few trees and many sheep. Ranges of lofty hills rose both south and north. The hills to the south pitched down to the English Channel, yet the only hints of the ocean's nearness were the frequent lighthouses on the higher tops. Their roving eye at night, turning forever across these grassy slopes, must seem like patient shepherds that watch their flocks upon the hills. We rested again beyond Sandford, finding soft grass beside a stream. It is the elbow that grows hard and callous on a cycling trip. And so to Shanklin, which stands on the island's southeastern coast.

Daish's hotel came first and we found it excellent with a usual garden. It sinks the level of my narrative to grossness but I confess that we all turned laundress until dinner. W—— reported that he found best results by taking a hot bath and inviting his linen to swim with him. It put, as he said, a dull domestic finish on the day. A brisk breeze was blowing and I pinned my clothing on the curtains at the window, for the satisfaction after dinner of pointing with boastful finger at my handiwork.

After sitting a bit in the garden we walked down through wooded lanes to a high platform in the natural rock that looked upon the ocean. Around Shanklin the great liners travel from Cherbourg and New York, but we saw nothing larger than fishing craft. A lighthouse or so was winking in the faded daylight with ineffective coquetry. Experience should tell the pretty creatures—these slim white sirens of the shoals and rock—that their best beguilement rises with the night.

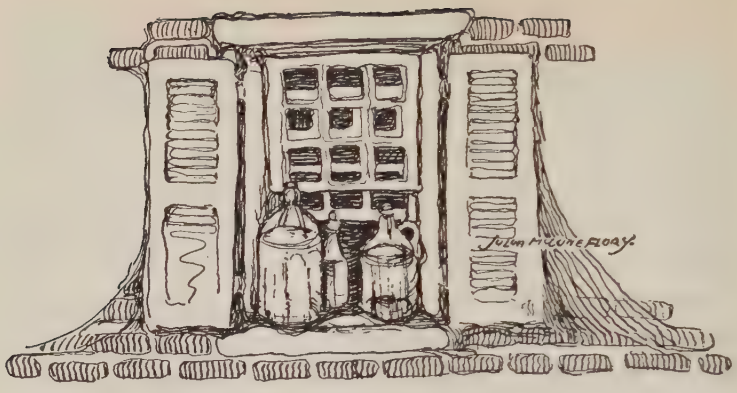
From the platform a steep path plunges to the ocean, where there is a tripperish patch of sand with a monotonous stretch of hotels and boarding houses. Jutting into the sea is a pier or so of the penny kind with machines for small gambling and eyeslots for smaller scandal. I placed a shilling on a metal horse that seemed to be of swifter marking, then pressed the lever and lost my money.

An hour in the garden of the inn and then to

bed, to the soft rustling of my shirt in the breezes of the window. And all night it slapped like a sail that feels the rising of the wind and frets to start.

Shanklin has a remnant of ancient streets with thatched and timbered houses, and on the following morning the Green Feather set up her canvas to make a sketch. Somewhere hereabouts Keats wrote Lamia, but the village seems to have forgotten it. The rest of us went walking on the beach. Then I left them to the metal horses and the gods of chance, and sat in a corner of the rock where I fell to thinking of a piece of work that waited for me in the autumn.

Nothing can exceed my astonishment . . . But I have put my thoughts together in a paper by themselves.



Lodged for coolness on the ledge.

CHAPTER XVIII

TO BE READ ONLY BY SERIOUS STUPID PERSONS

NOTHING, I repeat, can exceed my astonishment of a month ago when, on a visit by invitation to a college president at his office, I was asked to conduct a class in composition—essays, stories, the carpentry of plays, things like that.

I am still young enough to be afraid of a college president, who seems in general to be rather a cold storage for the icy fruits of culture. Nor have I forgotten a certain occasion of alarm in my student days at such a summons. As I rung the doorbell last month a dim fancy flashed upon me that again my marks were down. Was I warned in French, or had Algebra risen as of old to plague me? Perhaps I was to lose my room on the campus for some misdemeanor. Time was when

such a disgrace lay on me. I must betray the almost forgotten sins of youth.

There was once at Yale a celebration that was known as bottle-night. The bottles—my pen is innocent of tipsy riot—had been used for water. We gathered and saved them through the year and cluttered a closet with them for the exquisite pleasure of hurling them from the window on a certain night of June that was chronicled, let me repeat, as bottle-night on the calendar of our happy holidays.

I do not know the origin of this glad celebration, but I fancy its start was casual and by chance. Perhaps an eager student, whose gullet grew dry at some dull Horatian banquet, tipped his bottle off the sill as he quenched his thirst; for these bottles were lodged for coolness on the ledge outside the window. It struck the pavement below with such a merry clatter that another student, sloughed equally in dismal Greek, by intention followed suit. This second racket was enough excuse for putting off the lesson of the leanest scholar, and heads came out of windows here and there to learn what the pleasant uproar meant.

Was the Spanish fleet—for I write of almost forgotten times when the Maine exploded—was the Spanish fleet sunk in Manila harbor? Had the rusty monitor that lay in the mud of the Quinnipiac and guarded us with its broken cannon of the Civil War—had it been struck by a shell from the open ocean and was New Haven under siege?

As either joy or fear is properly expressed by noise a dozen or so more bottles were dropped.

By this time, as you may guess, the swift contagion had run from room to room and bottles by the staggering armful burst out against the stones. And then came beer steins, drunken tobies from Mory's, basins and water pitchers, even thunder mugs (for history must not shrink to name an ugly spade)—anything that would break with sufficient clatter. It is said that one student, swayed by a zealous love of country and eager to do his bit, threw down his picture frames and had gone so far as to drag his window seat halfway across his casement when at last a tardy reason cooled his passion. Farnam echoed Durfee. South Middle called across to Welch. Deep, as it were, answered unto deep.

When it was over and the little tune of midnight had been played on the chapel bells there was some slight inquiry among the students as to what the celebration marked, but in general it was felt that the night had been worthy in itself from whatever cause it had sprung. It was checked therefore on the calendar as an extra feast night of the merry saints—a supererogatory season of noisy hecatomb to a sophomore's unknown god. And then and there another Yale tradition had been born and christened. By the time that freshmen had grown to be seniors—for old custom rises quickly in the short generations of the campus—it was considered

that bottle-night was as ancient as the college, that it ran back of Pierson and Styles, or any of the bearded, stained-glass presidents in chapel.

But there came a time when the faculty frowned upon the custom. It was parceled in their unperceptive minds with the brutal games of Omega Lambda Chi, with drunken beer slides, with orgies at Savin Rock, with singing in the happy chorus at the Hyperion when the Belle of New York brought her pink and frisky legs to town, with all those secret rites of initiation when freshmen were cuffed to their proper place.

Perhaps a dusky laundress, borrowing an hour of night for the return of clean-filth (I write in the stale patter of an undergraduate) was hit on the woolly head and killed as she wheeled in her baby carriage of shining wash. A Scott's boy may have been struck as he delivered a cart of pressed trousers to the silken fops of Vanderbilt. Or a Greek professor may have been flattened to the earth as he sought the lost digamma beneath the campus moon. Anyway, the faculty set its teeth hard from molar to bicuspid and said the thing must stop. Vile townies known as spotters were placed in the shadows of the campus to note the belching windows.

I had been one of the merriest of the bottle-throwers and I was called into the shadow of the dean. As I sat with the other miscreants in my gloomy trial I heard care-free students whistling

beneath the windows—crafty fellows who had taken the precaution to hurl their bottles from a neighbor's room. And I recalled how prisoners once in Venice caught at their dungeon's heavy window the songs of the gay canal. The Dean's cold eye did not melt in the fire of my excuses. My high enthusiasm for an unknown god had no place on the narrow path of his theology.

I lost my room. And now—last month—on the steps of the president's house—coming by peaceful invitation—with unclouded conscience—washed clean of sin—I shivered at the recollection of the past.

Fancy, then, my relief and astonishment when I was invited to conduct a class in the university. I, whose memory still stung with the birch, was to wield the birch myself; and I pray that I may not descend to vicarious revenge.

In what way does one go about a task of teaching and how may one prepare? Many years ago, for one day only, I was a substitute instructor in a Sunday school; but then a leaflet was handed out with the lesson set. I had only to brush up on the golden text and use a long pointer on the map, as harder matters were handled by the superintendent in his address at the end. But now, with two months before me for preparation, I do not know which way to turn. The faculty left within a few days of my appointment, and I was alone to sweat upon the problem.

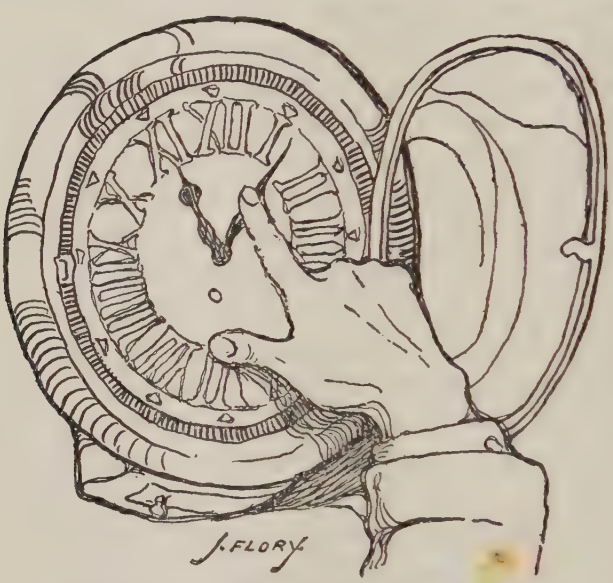
I bought a book or so, but fouled myself in un-

necessary rules and then escaped to Europe dragging my burden with me. Like the hag of a storybook I am bent under a sack of troubles.

It will be terrifying, when we open in September, to see a row of eager faces shining with expectation that I have a secret to make their writing easy, to see pencils poised for a word of wisdom as if I were a balloon of hottest gas and would presently loose the windy vent; still more terrifying to behold a general nodding of curly heads or snapping after flies. This last, with a rubber band, is a harmless sport for a drowsy student and tends to rid the room of pests, but I must now forget how it was once my solace and frown upon the custom. I used, also, through a sleepy hour of the English poets, to draw lines slantwise on my book, twisting them about to avoid cutting any word; and these lines to me were a railroad in a rolling country and it was a trick to choose the shortest course of easy curve. If a decasyllable rose like a mountain across a necessary path I dug a tunnel. It is nonsense, however, I shall deny my students.

Suppose I run dry before the hour is out! Here on the sands of England I can compose a speech that will last the afternoon. I can swing my arms in expressive gesture and find apt references at will. But before my class, in my hot embarrassment, my flowery periods may shrivel to fifteen minutes. How do teachers fill the gap? Do they scrawl headings on their cuffs? Do they lead a song to fill

the empty portion of the dawdling hour? Or will it be possible to stir the clock to a livelier pace? "My dear young ladies" I shall say, "consult for a moment the blackboard at the rear!" And then when



"Consult for a moment the blackboard at the rear!"

their backs are turned, perhaps I may lunge forward secretly to push ahead the minute hand.

And in those golden days of October when the trees are ripe with frost and the wind whistles a shrewd invitation from the north, how shall I hold their truant thoughts indoors, prisoners to my droning voice?

Will I be asked hard questions? I must look

up metaphor and simile. And certainly I must thumb around my grammar to find what an anacoluthon is. It might pop out and bite me any morn-

Would and should.

ing. Metonymy! There's a tough old customer. And synecdoche! I had thought that I would never need that word again when I dismissed it so many years ago. And would and should are like a pair of twins who have lost their ribbons.

In my own writing I say in turn these last two words aloud and my ear makes the choice by an uninstructed instinct; just as I find a bass in a chorus by trying all the pitches until I slip to a level that doesn't hurt. To this harmonious rumble I add now and then an upward quaver that does much toward stifling the shrill and unwholesome flutings of the tenor; but can a class room run unfettered on careless instinct?

Shall I follow Falstaff in my class and decline to give reasons on compulsion though they be as plentiful as blackberries? My students must look up these things themselves, I shall say, so that they will (or is it shall?) stick better in the memory. It will be best to scorn all definitions, to booh at these hard questions, and inform my class, thank God, that we have passed the primer.

I may as well confess at the very outset that style cannot be taught, that its best masters have taught themselves. A teacher's finger never wagged at Shakespeare. It was the hard practice of the world that laid its instructive birch across his shoulders. And how little we know of the methods of genius or even of talent! Did Lear drag word by word with continual mending, or did it brawl first-hand from a running pen? Were the Spectator Papers patched and polished through successive midnights or flung breathless to the printer's devil? Barchester, I have said, was written on Trollope's knee in railway carriages, and Dickens composed

his Pickwick Papers largely to the jolting of a hackney cab; but were these bouncing sentences never set afterwards to a smoother order? Was Thackeray's writing as facile as it sounds? William Dean Howells once told me that, after his first book, he never rewrote a novel; but is his memory to be entirely trusted? Now and then there is an exquisite page that was surely whittled. It is said that easy writing makes hard reading, and with equal emphasis the polished sentence is decried for its too apparent artifice.

Stevenson has, in a measure, admitted us to his confidence. On his excursions he put a notebook in his pocket and wove the scenery into words, but it was by rewriting, as he confesses, that he learned the mastery of words. There is hardly another modern writer who has so tinkered the mosaic of a sentence, and his sedulous ape is the most familiar beast in the literary zoo. And yet, if we try to follow the detail of his confession, his answers are as baffling as the juggler's explanation when he tucks back his cuffs and tells how he took the kicking rabbit from his hat. A friend of mine who practices to write a novel never reads an author who might affect his style; yet I myself believe in the schooling of the sedulous ape if finally one escapes from imitation and takes a free diploma at the end. There are as many methods as there are writers. We can know at most that all of them served a solitary apprenticeship outside the class-

room. Nor are the drugs of Coleridge and De Quincey any clue. It is an old story that Steele toiled at his Christian Hero with his head bandaged against his last night's cup, but the practice seldom makes a masterpiece, and I shall not commend it to my class.

All of these fellows of the ink pot, when writing their autobiographies, would serve material for our schooling if they printed generous pages of the choicer paragraphs with marks of erasure and correction. Ripening versions of the Grecian Urn, for example, would give us a hint or so to mend our own verse. We could rummage, as it were, in Walter Pater's wastebasket and study his struggle to perfection. And to smooth out the succession of his rising triumph would be of better use than the study of any treatise on style. Crippled sentences would acquire bit by bit an easy grace and speed which, in the final reading, we might swear were of swift impromptu.

With such hope I have examined the manuscripts that lie open in museums; but they are too perfect, and I suspect that they were copied fair, ironed and smoothed for the printer with all the tangle of the margin dusted clear. Work done, they have put on a white collar for the party, when I had hoped to find them sweating in their overalls. And I therefore suggest that famous authors, when they bequeath their manuscripts to some great gallery, throw their early mangled copies in the bundle with

all their blots and changes, so that students after them may learn how the cadence of their pages rose.

It is to the point that in a life of Shakespeare written lately by J. Q. Adams there is offered a page of somewhat tangled alterations as possibly in the autograph of Shakespeare—a page from a play of another author tinkered for the Globe. But the writing is so foul to a modern eye that a layman cannot read it, and so the lesson fails.

There are some things, however, that may be taught in class; and I thought I might instruct my students in a thrifty use of adjectives, inasmuch as most beginners hang them on every noun and choose to think that a very high mountain is really taller than a mountain. Perhaps I might bar them from the use of any adjectives to rouse their ingenuity to find a noun that needs no padding. After a thrifty season, an adjective now and then might be allowed them like a single pancake in convalescence.

An artificial stretching of vocabulary is not to be urged; for the number of words employed, for purposes of style, is a secondary matter. It is their quality and fine use that are needed most. Nor may students exult when they have found a hard word to express their thought. For, in the first place, hard words make hard reading. Beneath their weight a sentence staggers like a man with a bag of coal. It is usually a pattern of easy words

that gives a sentence grace, and any octosyllabic explosion blows the thought quite off its track. But secondly, and of more importance, hard words have mostly been coined for a special use and their meaning is narrow and scientific. They stiffen a paragraph to a formula. They smell unpleasantly of the laboratory and the schoolroom.

But common words have grown up with the language. They have been bartered back and forth until they are loaded with experience and association. With them life has been measured for a thousand years. To them cling both joy and sadness. Each century has left a deposit on them. Their very meaning has shifted back and forth as fashions change. Democracy or despotism, city or country preference, farce or tragedy, youth or age, power or slavery, reverence or contempt, have set them to different uses. They have lived in triumph and adversity, in gutter and palace. They have been both truth and jest and have starved and feasted. Sometimes they have started life poor and out at elbow, but have come to better fortune; or, fed in youth from a golden spoon, they have sunk to poverty.

With these common words children have been taught a lesson at their mother's knee, with them they have been sung to sleep. A million books have been made of them, and the far-off hum of cities is the thick fabric of their use. They have lulled multitudes to obedience, and rebellion has been

stirred by them. At their sound Saxon and Roman set up their standards. By them London Tower was built. They have been shouted in mediæval streets. Ladies have listened to their song and have confessed their love to the silly moon. With them the Magna Charta was signed and the Armada fought. They crossed the seas in the stormy Mayflower and set up their stockade against the Indians. Their common use has built America. These common words defy exact definition because they mean so much. They contain a hundred elusive overtones of racial experience and recollection. A secret of style is to make this overtone a servant to the thought.

Sometimes, it is true, they seem shabby at the seam, and worn and rubbed. And yet it is usually their partnership with other words that is threadbare. An adjective and noun, like a fretting family, have been hitched together until both their backs are sore. But freed from one another for a season each regains its freshness. For words themselves—old common words—do not wear out. Let but a master use them and they shine at a dozen facets. It is the base kitchen word that is the surest timber for a sonnet, but it must divorce itself from stale and spotted company. The babble of vulgar tongues can be made the trumpet of shrewd persuasion if only its art is studied.

Words must do more than fit the sense. They must, also, please the ear; for in prose as well as

verse there is a kind of cadence, although of a different and more liberal sort. If this cadence falls to monotonous singsong it palls like a second spoon of honey, and prose therefore must know how to break its melody with comely discord. Verse holds like a dancer to his waltz, but the feet of prose must move in a looser measure and ignore the insistent drum. Yet a dim cadence demands an accent here and there and a word must be discarded if it does not show the necessary stress. It would be good practice to take a page of excellent prose and by the substitution of words of equal meaning and different stress see how its ease and grace depart.

In prose, also, as well as verse, the ear discriminates among the vowels and consonants. They must lie in untiring sequence without hammering on a single letter. A word, for example, that overloads a sentence with the letter S must be abandoned even if Webster affirms that its meaning fits precisely to the niche. In these cases the ear must sit as an equal partner with the reason.

There is a loose uncomely kind of sentence that never shoots at the mark but wanders like a sniffing dog. This is bred by our newspapers and is the offspring of haste and disordered thinking. I know of no better ridicule of this than a chapter of Quiller-Couch's Art of Writing entitled Jargon; and this chapter I shall ram down my students' gullets until they gag.

There is a false instruction that recommends solely an Anglo-Saxon word. For the glory of English is its rich theft from many languages, and it is a narrow democracy of letters that challenges the family of a word and inquires too closely by what steerage it came to us. And I have observed that many writers who in theory decry a word that is derived from Latin are the first to be off their guard and use it.

But chiefly I shall impress upon my students that writing reflects the brain, and that the beauty and clarity of words arise from a beauty and clarity of thought and judgment. Nor can water be pumped from an empty well. It is by the study of great books and by experience of life that they can learn to write. And then a whole world opens to their expression.

Youth is but half itself if it gropes not blindly in a maze of thought, if it stretch not to grasp the moon; and it shall be my labor to discover in its unskilled utterance this world that is too tremendous to be tied within the logic of an apprenticed sentence. On such paragraphs, however loosely they ramble to an ineffective end, I shall not lay a sacrilegious finger, because I know that the glory of the sunrise lies unexpressed sometimes behind the mist of words. Some day, when their apprenticeship is past, may these glittering peaks still remain to give color to thoughts that the years perhaps have dulled. Any practiced

writer of mature age remembers his early effort; and, although the reward of his youthful labor filled only a feverish and silly page, he knows with what sharp reality he worked. He is lucky if the old fire still warms him when his schooling has progressed through twenty years. A better chap-

A person of some dignity.

ter, now, that runs in comprehensive order, is a tamer cousin to the youth that stood bewildered and ineffective on the heights. Once, under the romantic moon of Heidelberg, I wrote a story of a king's jester and of lovers that sighed upon the midnight. The manuscript, the very plot, is gone; but in my silly memory it quite tops what I have written since.

And so now, here, on the sands of Shanklin, I argue in fancy with my class and guide them by sweet persuasion. Already I see myself a person of some dignity, moving with solemn step across the campus with a black bag that contains my papers, while freshmen stand aside to courtesy. I shall converse with the president almost as an equal. And when October has burned the fruits of earth and the wind vainly whistles its invitation from the north, I shall sit snug within my classroom in fearful state behind my birch. I shall commune with the masters of the past and guide my students on the flowery paths of culture.

And now perhaps my gambling friends have lost their last shilling on the metal horses that race on Shanklin's pier and we may go to lunch.

The flight of a lariat thrown across the hills.

CHAPTER XIX

SOFTLY IN THE CUSHIONS

AT one o'clock we packed ourselves in a motor with a sense of luxury and wealth after our week on bicycles. We were off for a general round of the Isle of Wight.

The road from Shanklin climbs in majestic curve to Bonchurch with the ocean continually in sight. It is the flight of a lariat thrown across the hills with the noose tightening on Bonchurch at the top. I had been told that we must not miss the churchyard, as it is a beautiful spot and Swinburne is buried there. We did slow up.

The road now lay for many miles under the island's southern cliffs which so protect it from the north that the winter climate is soft and temperate and sought by invalids. Myrtles, fuchsias and geraniums live throughout the year without cover; for the hills turn up their furry collar against the

cold and snugly button the undercliff inside. We passed through Ventnor, of which my memory is a pleasant blur of hotels and hills and trees and ocean. At St. Catherine's Point there stands one of the most powerful coast lights in the world. This has always been a dangerous turn for navigation and it is recorded that on the lofty down above St. Catherine's there stood in the days before the dissolution a chantry where a solitary monk said masses for its founder and kept a light upon the cliff to warn vessels off the treacherous coast. And when his cell fell vacant mariners steered widely to the south and hushed their crew to listen to the surf.

Nor is the danger entirely gone; for presently we saw below us, listed in the sand, a vessel that had come ashore. She was a freighter of considerable size and was probably in coast wise traffic. Several tugs stood about with hands in their pockets, waiting for the tide to rise when they might push her off.

Our motor climbed at Blackgang until we were well above the ocean; and here we stopped to view the chine, which is a gorge that breaks down to the water through the shattered cliffs. Like so much of the island, it is laid out for trippers with paths and steps and benches, and a penny shop must be passed for entrance. I hold no brief for this kind of cockney embellishment; yet, unless the ground be entirely cluttered with slot machines

and whirling painted horses, I do not think that they wholly wreck the work of nature. It is at least a crumb of comfort from a sordid banquet that the pleasures of the spot are so widely shared, and that a thousand parlors will be gayly furnished with penny decoration to mark a reckless holiday in sober lives.

And usually, by a wise neglect, there is a point out of the run of trippers and quite remote from the band stand, where one can turn his haughty back and thank God he is not as other men. So, while I fret at a constant elbow in my ribs, I rather enjoy these crowded places that are so closely cousined to the circus and the county fair, where humanity steals an hour of high excitement from the drab progress of the week. And as I go among the booths that toss their copper pleasures to the throng I find a chief regret that the painted shells and transparent pictures are toys that the years must dull. I envy the hungry folk who eat from hampers, their flare of small excitement at the packing of the charabanc, their careless song as the engine starts chugging home. But at Blackgang the season had hardly begun and the crowd was thin.

Charabancs crowd England. No castle or cliff is too remote. Every resort is their mecca and they mark good beer more surely than a bush. A fleet of them anchor at Wordsworth's cottage in the lakes and soil the spot. Arthur's castles

endure their patient siege. Their honk has drowned the horns of Elfland. Charabancs are everywhere, and at first one resents that his exclusive motor must rub against their vile contagion. In a way, however, I suppose, they show the change of modern England. The rich are too poor to drive a private motor and a rising middle class employs them for a holiday. And certainly they furnish an abundance of honest pleasure.

We climbed out upon the cliffs of Blackgang above the huge wreckage of the chine, and its disorder seemed a fragment of the first chaos of creation when the earth was but newly parted from the waters—a world just dumped upon the curb like the rummage of a moving van before its furniture is sorted and set to place. But Gingerale refused the view and trifled away his pennies at a slot machine on the edge of the awful cliff.

After Blackgang the coast is less picturesque and we dozed for an hour to Yarmouth at the western end of the island. Yarmouth was once a smuggler's village and it is said that whenever an old house is pulled down some evidence of this traffic is discovered. An extensive clearance not many years ago laid bare a system of tunnels and recesses where these dark-fingered merchants hid their dangerous wares; but we snored in ignorance among the cushions. Our return lay inland to Carisbrooke Castle.

Since prehistoric days Carisbrooke has been the

center and stronghold of the island and from its battlements an instructed fancy can watch the drama of its troubled years.

The rivulet of Lukely runs beneath the walls and in its valley is the evidence of Celtic occupation. No matter how spry one is in getting about the Celts have always been there before him. They are the early birds who get the worm, but this should be no loss to dainty travelers. The prologue of Carisbrooke starts in a Celtic twilight, and then falls the curtain of forgotten days. The first act proper shows the ships of Vespasian beached upon the island's muddy shore and the Roman banners carried to the highest hill. And now the hill is fortified and from its hub radiating roads are built.

In six hundred and eighty-five the island was christianized, and at Brading to the east a church was built of wood and wattles. Presently, in the slow tick of time, the island became a part of the see of Winchester. And then came the Saxons who raised at Carisbrooke their palisades on the ruins that the Romans left. And then the Danes repaired the demolition of the Saxons. All through the harvest of ten sixty-six the fleet of Harold watched for Norman William. Here Fitz Osbern, who fought at Senlac, built his massive keep; and his name is still cherished in Osborne House where Queen Victoria spent a frequent holiday on the shore of Southampton Water. It was near Caris-

brooke that Odo, Bishop of Bayeux, collected troops for an expedition to Italy to seize the Papacy, and here in a priory he was arrested by the conquering William. King John, when he had signed the Magna Charta, took refuge with the pirates of the Isle of Wight.

And then, during a hundred years, until the French were shattered at Agincourt, the island lay exposed to attack from across the channel and the walls of Carisbrooke were thickened and deeper moats were dug. In the days of Queen Elizabeth, we read that there was no post to London and that letters were carried back and forth by a "coneyman" who visited the island at short intervals to buy rabbits for the city's market. A journey to London was then "almost an East-Indian voyage," and persons made their wills before the start.

In the year fifteen eighty-eight danger shook its fist from Spain. The great fleet gathered at Corunna and was sighted first at Plymouth. A crowd of fisherwomen gathered on the Hoe and they saw the smoke of its encounter with the English fleet. Then the Armada coasted to the east to play transport to Philip's troops that lay at Dunkirk, and the Isle of Wight "watched with lighted match and loaded gun." The wind fell and the Armada flapped its listless sails until a storm whipped it to the north with Drake snapping at its heels. Drake had but a remnant of shot and shell, but the Spaniard did not guess it.

Its flight bore it around the Hebrides and the foaming cliffs of Ireland until a tempest scattered its wreckage on the ocean and strewed the western sand with Spanish bones.

And so we come to the Civil War when Charles the First was held prisoner at Carisbrooke and crossed the portcullis on journey to London for his trial and execution.

I grow dull, but near an end.

Doctor Thomas Arnold, Master of Rugby, was born on the Isle of Wight. Henry, the Earl of Southampton, who was Shakespeare's friend, was once its governor. It has sent to parliament John Churchill, the Duke of Wellington, Lord Palmerston and George Canning. Johns Wilkes and Alfred Tennyson lived here. Swinburne passed here many holidays of his boyhood, and his poems echo its ocean and its gardens. John Keats wrote a part of Endymion under the walls of Carisbrooke, perhaps on this very slope where now we rest.

"Many and many a verse I hope to write,
Before the daisies, vermeil rimm'd and white,
Hide in deep herbage; and ere yet the bees
Hum about globes of clover and sweet peas,
I must be near the middle of my story.
O may no wintry season, bare and hoary,
See it half finish'd: But let Autumn bold,
With universal tinge of sober gold,
Be all about me when I make an end."

On this visit to the castle the gate was open and in a moment of weakness we yielded to a guide who presently droned an endless patter which in

"The medieval world is very much alive at Carisbrooke."

mercy I have condensed. The poor rascal had been shell-shocked in the war and he was earning a miserable livelihood, but we did not at first understand his plight and extend our sympathy.

The mediæval world is very much alive at Carisbrooke and I know of no castle that links one in more lively fashion with the past. We were shown the ruined chamber where King Charles had been a prisoner and we looked from the grated window where he had sighed his soul to freedom. The trenches were pointed out that were dug against the fear of a Spanish landing and the inclosure where cattle were preserved against a siege. We walked around the castle walls while our guide pattered the age of every battlement. A question broke his thread and sent him back to the Norman Conquest, so we held our peace. In the middle of the inclosure on a grassy plot stands the residence of the island's governor. And hereabout is a well of ancient days with a bucket that is fetched to the top by a donkey hitched in an endless circle. It requires a sixpence to see this donkey, but cheaper donkeys are common, so we passed him by.

But the castle's feature is the donjon keep which towers massively above the encompassing walls and is approached by a steep staircase outside to a high portal in its base. This open flight of steps must have been a deadly hazard to those who stormed the tower. It was on the battlements above that signal fires gave warning of the coming of the Spanish fleet on a certain night of June when Shakespeare was newly come to London and Tyburn still smelled of Jesuit priests. Inside my

desk I have an unfinished tale of the days of Queen Elizabeth—the story of an actor who played on Moorfields and was meshed in the Spanish plot—and by a pleasant theft I have lifted this same tower of Carisbrooke and have set it on the Cornish coast above Polperro for the excitement of my final chapter. Before the dawn, waiting for the lights of the Armada like an evil constellation fallen to the sea, on this tower I have placed a most romantic scene. But this is no more than the usual kleptomania of authors. It is a careless owner who leaves his property unlocked when a writer prowls about.

There was much to see at Carisbrooke but the day wore on to dinner. For an hour we sped across the hills, and stiff of joint we clambered out at Shanklin.

Another evening with far-off fishing boats, winking lights and children running on the sands, and so to bed!

Gingerale had unloaded the litter of his pockets and when I came up I counted the precious trifles that freighted him. A large round stone, a flat red stone, a paper joke book, four rubber bands, two pieces of chalk, a piece of soap cut like a gambler's dice, a button from his coat, another from his underwear, a bone collar button, several postage stamps, a ball of tinfoil for making bullets, a suspicious handkerchief, a pair of candy tongs, a cork, an empty spool, three nuts, a pamphlet,

"How to Manage a Baseball Team," an over-cherished chocolate caramel, a tin whistle, a false mustache, a boy-scout knife on a chain that fastened to a button. As he remarked, "I can't lose this knife unless I lose my pants." And yet it was not pants he wore but rather a bank vault for his treasures. It gave him an unwholesome bulge around his hips and seat.

And so, I repeat, to bed!

My own great-grandfather on journey.

CHAPTER XX

YO! HO! AND A BOTTLE OF BEER

I HAD resolved to rise early on the following day and cycle back to Cowes, deserting my soft companions who preferred a train. But the hot resolve of evening cools at breakfast and we went by rail together. We boarded a tiny thing on wheels of equal dignity and weight to the coaches that Staten Island calls a train. I rather like these Pomeranian affairs and I feel as if I were my own great-grandfather on journey with tight breeches and straps in some old print of early travel. We changed once or twice to other delicate organisms and in due time, as all good books of travel say, we arrived at Cowes.

Here, owing to the coal strike, we found no steamboat running until dinner time, so we went to the Gloster Hotel for lunch. Afterwards, in the interval of reason that follows food, it occurred to us that with a hundred sailboats and motor

craft lying in the harbor one of them might set us on the mainland. Accordingly we rummaged along the water front until we had several dollars worth of thirsty sailors following with offers of assistance. A sailor with a friendly eye, a pair of bow legs and a dusty gullet piloted us to a certain motor-boat and extolled its captain as the prince of skippers. For this we paid him a shilling, and he touched his cap and laid it out in foam in a handy bar.

The skipper lived up town, but the sailor had wagged a loose direction with his thumb and I cycled round until I found him at one of fifty identical doors on a monotonous brick street. We jockied to a price as he stood napkin in hand, sucking his teeth for a remnant of his dinner. It was fixed that we were to sail in half an hour, just as soon as he could attend to a dainty spoonful left on his plate.

I found the Leather Button family sitting on the wharf among their luggage like emigrants waiting for their ship. On my map I pointed out to them that our destination should not be Southampton but a point across the Solent nearer the New Forest. We put this desire presently to the skipper and he agreed to set us down at the village of Buckler's Hard which is several miles up the Beaulieu River—which, for ease, is called the Boley River by the natives. The English always tame an alien word and drop out letters that vex

the tongue. I talked once with a train conductor who had run through Wales for twenty years; yet, in calling out the stations, he held no compromise with the country's liquid double L. It was L only; not the great mouthful of tongue and saliva that the Welshman washes around his cheek to get the proper sound. From Buckler's Hard a road led into the New Forest to Lyndhurst where we planned to spend the night.

We cast off among a dozen pleasure boats. A great freighter was steaming down the Solent as we rounded the island and we danced in the waves of its propeller. The tide, also, was running out to sea, so the skipper turned our prow up stream. Pelagus Solvens, says the Ecclesiastical Bede, "in which . . . two tides of the ocean, which boil around Britain from the boundless Northern Sea, meet together in daily strife, and, the conflict being ended, return to the ocean whence they came." Which, after all, is quite natural, and is exactly what the Duke of York did with his hundred men.

It was not more than five miles to the mainland and before long we came inside a sandy spit that guards the river. For several more miles we followed the winding Beaulieu through low pasture land. Buckler's Hard, at this height of tide, was at the head of navigation even for small craft like ours, and we shoved against a wooden landing that looked as if boats had been shoving against it for

years and hoped some day to push it over. The highroad passed at the top of the village; but the town itself was only a single broad street running to the river. Rather it lay on its back to bathe its toes and rest. On each side of it was a continuous engaged building with the look of an almshouse. We saw nobody in the village, but it may have been the hour of the afternoon nap. A meadow lay along the river and we lifted our bicycles over a gate, with a fearful eye upon cattle that seemed to frisk an angry tail.

We tiptoed through the village not to disturb the natives and turned west on the highroad at the top. We were now in the New Forest and had a right to demand the fine old trees that had been promised in the guidebook. But the trees were small, and the road was hot and sunny. Up to this point in our travels we had had delightful weather with cool showers at night. The days had equaled the poets' claim of an English spring. And here we were in the New Forest, the Arden of our fancy, in a blistering heat.

At the town of Beaulieu we caught a glimpse of a ruined abbey across the river. It was Cistercian, as one might guess from the beauty of its site, and was founded by King John in the thirteenth century. A bridge was near and our guidebook offered us ruins better than common, but we wiped the sweat and kept on our way. Beyond Beaulieu we crossed a treeless plain. To the south

was a considerable growth of trees but they afforded no relief. It was three miles from Lyndhurst, while we were still dripping in the sun, that we came on an alehouse by the road. We ordered a bitter white-collared drink and asked the old woman as bitterly where we could find the New Forest. She looked at us scornfully, pointed across the bare country and said that we were in the midst of it. We drained our beer, dripped to her door and pedaled on.

It was nearly dinner time when we came to Lyndhurst and the Grand Hotel. It is an excellent old house, filled with people who come to hunt—people who dress for dinner. A cold landlady looked us up and down with a hint that we seek a meaner hotel, but consented to house us when we told her that our bags were at the station. It was Alfred Jingle, you may remember, who, on his travels with the Pickwick Club, excused his shabbiness with a similar hint of mighty boxes that were delayed. Anyway, we were given good rooms with a bath not more than a hundred yards down the corridor. And in half an hour, when we met the sweet-scented world of sport and fashion we were as clean as any advertisement of soap. The head waiter, however, to shame our tweeds, put us squarely in the middle of the dining room and flanked us with evening clothes. And we grumbled in our soup because our bags were late.

The Grand Hotel, it seems, was built by a ref-

ugee from the French Revolution, and only within the last few years has it come out of private hands. It sets in a garden flanked by mighty trees, with

In the music of wind and leaves forgot our dusty road.

at least an acre of fine lawn. A rhododendron overreached the ridgepole of the house and was a mass of blossoms.

We sat in the garden for a beverage that the English are pleased to consider coffee, and in the music of wind and leaves forgot our dusty road.

CHAPTER XXI

LAZY DAYS

A MEMORY lingers of three pleasant days at Lyndhurst. Our landlady was not as sour by several pickles as she at first appeared. She even went so far as to pull her pointed nose from her ledger where it sniffed for errors and to talk to us as equals, man to man. Nor may I forget that she lent us a deck of dirty playing cards with no more than a shaking finger that all fifty-two of them must be returned. She also stirred up the delivery of our bags so that our tweeds might not offend her spotless guests at dinner.

She told us how we might see the forest best—trees! and not the bare-cropped plain. And she was the instrument in a contract with a bored, thin-ribbed horse that drew us slowly to its shadowy depth. As we clambered in his buggy he looked

around at us with a tired expression which showed that the trip was no novelty to him and was certainly not worth the effort.

As I have hinted elsewhere, I have no enthusiasm for the horse in general. I consider that he is built too high for safety, and that later invention is needed, as with the first tall bicycle. Nor do I feel entirely at my ease when he turns his head and shows his teeth at me, long yellow fangs that threaten to scrape along my arm. I am the last person to look a gift horse in the mouth. As for a certain quivering of his neck, I cannot but conclude that some deviltry boils up beneath to threaten my security. It would be a better ordering of nature were he controlled by brakes and levers, and frisked only as you gave him gas. I am in exact agreement with a friend of mine who says that he finds horses either dangerous or monotonous. But as horses go, I had no quarrel with this particular beast, for he had fallen to a slippered state and had lost the ugly tricks of youth. On a downward stretch, with the buggy pushing, he was good for seven miles an hour.

We had now come to know our landlady and she confided to us that tourists on bicycles were not what they used to be, but were recruited from the lower strata—not the best people, really!—and that it was because of this social readjustment that she had looked coldly on our arrival. Let me add, except for her, that we met nothing

but an instant kindness and civility from every hotel keeper on our travels.

Our days at Lyndhurst were spent chiefly in the hotel grounds, for here at our very door were trees worthy of the forests' legends—of those days when King William Rufus (I forget the number of his royal license) laid out the district as a hunting park and drove the peasants from their homes with an inhuman negligence that earned his tragic end. As a cockney remarks in this week's Punch—" 'E buttered 'is own bread, an' so 'e 'ad to lie on it."

Our one excursion with the above-mentioned bony horse occupied a delightfully sleepy afternoon and took us to the Rufus Stone—the spot where this cruel king lay on his buttered bread. Our driver had the latest gossip of the deed, and he pointed out its circumstance to ourselves and a dozen other trippers who gathered for his wisdom. Our horse, who knew the story by heart, fell into an uneasy sleep, with three legs on stiff duty and the fourth hanging in a limp sabbatical. It was a plot, our driver told us, to rid England of a hated king and one of his own retainers is supposed to have popped an arrow at him with intention. A certain Sir William Tyrrell may have been the man—for our driver was not one of your dogmatic historians—and there is a legend of his flight across the forest. A blacksmith on the Avon shod his horse and helped him across the river and the shallow is still called Tyrrell's Ford. The body

of the king lay neglected until a charcoal burner threw it in his cart and bore it off to Winchester, where it was buried without ceremony or grief or honor. And presently the tower above his coffin fell, and good men said it was a proper answer to the sacrilege of burying so foul a king in a sacred place.

South of Ringwood at the edge of the New Forest and not far from Tyrrell's Ford Alice Lisle once lived, who offered refuge to a dissenting minister after Monmouth's army had been defeated at Sedgemoor. This James of Monmouth was the reputed son of Charles the Second and was rather an ass who thought to seize the English throne by landing at Lyme Regis and inflaming the country folk. But Alice Lisle, for her act of mercy, was burned by Judge Jeffreys in the Bloody Assize. There is still a field close by the Avon where corn once grew, and there James himself was caught; and his execution was a London holiday and apprentices put up their shutters and jostled for a place on Tower Hill.

The Rufus Stone stands in a forest of great trees and here for the first time I learned that the gorgeous canvases of As You Like It have their origin in nature. These trees are seldom tall, but they are of massive girth and are gnarled with giant muscle. Cleared of underbrush, spacious shadowy avenues opened in every direction and stretched up hill and down. Maurice Hewlett's forest lov-

ers might wander here and think themselves still in a golden century. Somewhere a stream came down from Malwood, and I have no doubt that the eye of fancy may still see the melancholy Jacques reclining "under an oak whose antique root peeps out upon the brook that brawls along this wood." We wakened our horse and jogged back home.

Trees once covered all of the New Forest, but only a small woodland is left. A tract of wood suitable for aëroplane wings was cut, we were told, in the late war. Yet it has escaped better than Sherwood, whose fields lie entirely naked in the sun. In the denser part of the New Forest winding roads wander as they will and streams invite one to follow them into a magic depth of shadow. All this I saw with one eye, for the other slept in the easy jouncing of the buggy.

I must not forget the cuckoos of Lyndhurst. I had looked upon the cuckoo sentimentally as a little rascal who in Elizabethan times had endangered the peace of husbands, but it had not occurred to me that he still existed. But the gardens at Lyndhurst are alive with him and like Horatio's rooster he singeth all night long. Nothing so small and piping could disturb my rest, but the Tweedledums are light sleepers and by their account at breakfast a convention of cuckoos had been perched outside their windows in wanton boast of the nests that they had ruined.

The town of Lyndhurst is nothing—a single street with stabling for hunters and shops of worthless souvenirs. The court of the forest was once held in the Verderers' Hall at Lyndhurst and was called the Swainmote, but the building was destroyed in eighteen fifty-two—so that did not bother us. Here used to be held every forty days a court for offenses against "vert and venison." Ginger-ale, true to his custom, became a crony of the postmistress and enriched his collection with a pocketful of canceled stamps. And he spent his odd hours counting their perforations to learn whether any sudden fortune had come to him. The floor of our room was littered with gummy paper that I picked up on my barefoot journey to the bath, and it served me as well as slippers.

The hotel was filled with an agreeable company, but they were sufficient to themselves as the English always are. Once I remarked that it was a pleasant day, and it was not denied.

And now on the fourth morning we packed our bags, dispatched them to Bath and took to our wheels again. Our landlady came up from her ledger for a bit of air and wished us a successful journey. The old horse was at the door, whisking his tail to keep himself from brooding. He mournfully turned his head, thinking at first that we were again bound for the Rufus Stone, but when he saw our bicycles a lively quiver ran along his spine as if he meditated a plan to bolt with us to freedom.

Keats, I confess it, hath a prettier touch, yet in a pinch I make verses of my own.

I am a horse who suffers remorse
That never a tripper I've kicked,
And I trot till blown to the Rufus Stone,
Till my bones are old and picked.

It is no fib I've a rattling rib,
And a buggy is tied to my rack,
And I trot, I repeat, till death is sweet
To the Rufus Stone and back.

From breakfast to dark it is no lark
To drag till the hour is late
A buggy and crew, and I tell to you
The Rufus Stone I hate.

At the driver's drone by the Rufus Stone
I hang my head for a nap,
But the flies are a pest like a hornet's nest,
So I stay awake and slap.

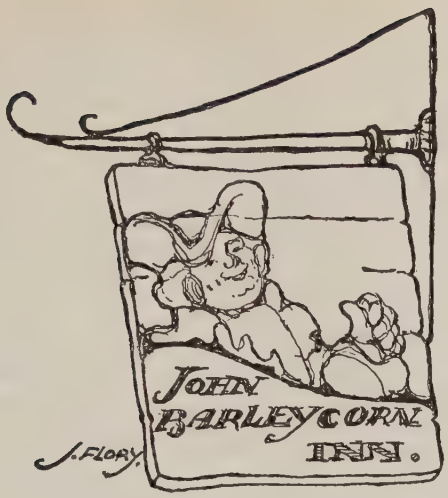
And the driver's tale is very stale,
For I've heard it told for years,
And Tyrrell's part and the charcoal cart
Both bore me into tears.

I loathe the trip, and I hate the whip,
And all tourists are my foes.
I detest the wheels and the buggy and meals
That I chew from a bag on my nose.

And I moan and curse, and what is worse
I hope that the day will appear
When a tripper's moan at the Rufus Stone
Will follow a bite in the ear.

And I plan some day to run away
And cause a general spill.
With a kick in the head I'll lay them dead.
By God, and so I will.

Oh death, thy sting is an easy thing—
To rest, as preachers tell,
Sans buggy and all, in a heavenly stall,
With the Rufus Stone in hell.



His gay and undoubted likeness.

CHAPTER XXII

THE ROAD TO SALISBURY

FROM Lyndhurst our road lay due north three miles through a closely wooded country of indifferent trees to the town of Cadnam which stands at the edge of the forest like a child who fears to venture in. Our start had been delayed until early in the afternoon and hereabouts a picturesque inn by the name of the Sir John Barleycorn inconsequently suggested tea. Above the door in bright oil there hung his gay and undoubted likeness. There was a small garden at the side with table and chairs, but a misty rain was falling and we sat in a stuffy parlor where

crayon portraits of Sir John's grandfather and his severe helpmate stood on easels with tidies at the top. God blessed the home in a gilded frame and suffered little children. Cleanliness sometimes is next to goodness but here it did not run closely neck to neck, for it was a crummy and spotted parlor.

The butter was none too fresh and the bread was edible only until the Green Feather pronounced it sour. My gullet is perhaps too credent toward any outpouring of the oven, and often I eat absently an unworthy mess until its inferiority is announced; when I at once stiffen with aversion. An egg that gossip has breathed upon may not sit in the hospitality of my spoon, for in scandal of this kind I accept the judgment of my neighbors.

At Cadnam we turned west but presently jogged to the north through Bramshaw and Landford. Here we came on the highroad between Southampton and Salisbury. We were now running counter to a thick traffic of charabancs, and on inquiry we learned that they were returning from Salisbury where there had been horse races in the early afternoon. Races at Salisbury seemed an absurdity, as the town sounds wholly of Trollope and the Bishop's parlor; but I suppose that the present is entitled to its pleasant vices even if it sits in an ancient seat. Dozens of motors passed with trippers singing on the homeward journey, and now and then one of them with girls upon the knee suggested the agreeable domesticity of

Paris. As Salisbury was our destination for the night the traffic raised a doubt whether the city might have enough hotels to contain the crowd.

And we now rested beside the road in what I am pleased to think was a dingle, a word sweet in my ears since I first read George Borrow. You recall that Borrow once traveled with Mr. Petulengro from an inn on the Welsh border that was called the Silent Woman and that they discoursed whether such a creature were possible in nature. And presently Mr. Petulengro offered his companion a gypsy wife if he would join his band. But Borrow, deep in argument against a woman's tongue, departed from him and went on his way alone until he came to a "deep hollow in the midst of a wide field." And this was called a dingle. It was here he fought with the flaming tinman and lived with the strange gypsy, Isopel Berners. Our dingle was less romantic, but we sat a hundred feet from the highroad beside a stream, shielded by a growth of bushes. At short intervals charabancs rolled by, and an unusual number of persons, both men and women, seemed to be seeing Nellie home and boasting about it in high tenor and soprano.

Titchbourne was now only a mile cross country to the west. This is the town where Roosevelt and Viscount Grey started to tramp the countryside that Roosevelt might be instructed in the songs of English birds. Grey has narrated the

excursion in a little book called Recreation and it is worth the reading.

And to the north lay Winterslow where Hazlitt intermittently lived. It was in eighteen hundred and eight that he married Miss Sarah Stoddart, who had previously been engaged to a "Mr. Turner, a Mr. White, a Mr. Dowling and a certain 'William'"; and after the marriage they went to live at her home in Winterslow. During these few months he wrote, by way of occupation for his honeymoon, a New and Improved Grammar of the English Tongue, for the Use of Schools. But did not Borrow teach Isopel the Armenian alphabet in the romantic dingle and scold her when she missed? Isopel left in a week or so, but Sarah stuck it out for several years. Here the Lambs came to visit the Hazlitts and afterward they all went to Oxford for the sights. It was this trip that furnished Lamb his Oxford in the Vacation. The Hazlitts lived uncomfortably and were divorced in Scotland about thirteen years later; but his love for Winterslow outlived the love he bore his wife, and before and after, many of his essays were written here. The hut where he lived is now the Pheasant Inn, three miles outside the town, and the window is still shown from which he looked with such a crabbed, brilliant gaze upon the evils of the world.

Presently we left the dingle and climbed, as my map shows, a patch of brown—stiff work afoot

—to Pepper Box Hill. Here we again dropped our bicycles and rested in a meadow. It was about seven o'clock and the day was softening into twilight. A broad green valley lay below us and mounted beyond to the hills of Salisbury Plain. Stonehenge was not in our range of sight, but it was an easy fancy that we looked upon the birthplace of ancient Britain and that the green prospect of hill and meadow was the soft coverlet of its disused cradle. The wind sighed with grieving melody as if aware that its child were gone.

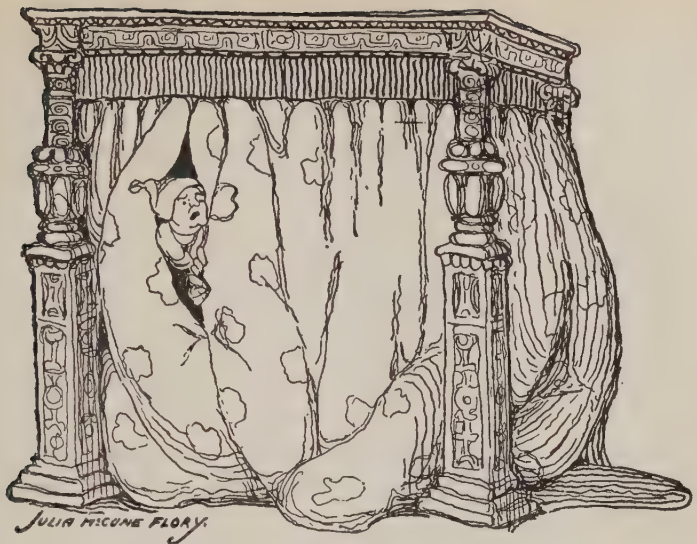
At what seemed to be the foot of the hill, but really six miles off, rose the graceful spire of Salisbury Cathedral standing higher than the hills beyond; but the city itself was lost in the crease and folding of the valley. The Salisbury spire, one of the loftiest in England, is unparalleled in line and grace; and at night a star might rest upon the top then scamper to the west to make good the loss of time. At first it seemed that the spire could not be Salisbury, for it appeared too near to fit our map; yet I could fumble no other village into range. I suppose I have seen finer stretches of country in England, but they were the unearned coin of idleness—the mere luxury of motor travel. Certainly no view lingers more pleasantly than this from Pepper Box Hill, lying on my elbow in the meadow with cattle at their endless dinner all about.

At the four crossings at Alderbury we sought a

telephone to learn whether rooms were to be had at the White Hart, but English telephones are as perverse as our own and the silly creature kept asking me if I were there. So we quarreled and parted.

It was half after eight when we entered the city and found that the White Hart could give us beds. It was past supper-time but the obliging landlady sent up a great plate of sandwiches and a jug of hot chocolate. We supped in state, as a king might sup if he had the luck to have a cyclist's appetite.

For an hour we walked the dark and ancient streets and from the cathedral close saw the mighty spire rising to the stars. On return I saw a soiled copy of Pepys' diary in the office of the inn and I read again how he buried his Parmesan cheese in the garden behind his house when London was afire. And so to bed, mighty pleased with this day's ride and its adventures that did appertain thereto.



And did unpin the curtains of my bed.

CHAPTER XXIII

AS MR. PEPYS WOULD HAVE WRITTEN IT

AWOKE early this day and did unpin the curtains of my bed which by custom I fasten close at night for snugness against a draft. In careless inns these pins be often out of place, whereat I have wakened in a wheeze. My chronometer points to eight and I shake it at my ear on the chance that the silly toy has stopped.

My head is still in nightcap—a lace trifle worked by my lady wife, poor wretch—but I put it out of doors and observe the day be fine and sunny.

A wench swabbing at a window across the way doth make great eyes at me but, being a pretty chit, I am more in pleasure than in pain, and do thank my Maker I am not so old but that a bit of frolic is left in me.

My wife, by God's mercy, this while still lay abed behind the curtains, for she thinks me forward if there be a petticoat. But presently she got up and put on her flowered tabby gown laced exceeding pretty and made by herself in thrift three years ago, which I much commend against a seamstress's cost. A compliment often saves the outlay of a pound.

I now comb and wash myself at a vile basin on a stand and somewhat foul the walls and floor with splashing suds, for I hold it but a dirty negligence to lather no more than appears at cuff and collar. Dress in my new suit of velvet with great skirts, and shine my buckles with spit and towel. At last I scent myself with sweetwater from a chemist on the Strand—a precaution against the plague—and tap at the door of those I am pleased to call the Tweedledums, a prank of wit arising from their tweed apparel. There are sleepy voices inside and I gather that they are still slug-abed, stiff with yesterday. So I kick with my boot for a good half minute. This stirs some anger from a saucy room across the hall, but Lord I give them better than they send.

An indifferent breakfast! I begin to tire of in-

cessant bacon, cold toast and lukish tea and would give much for a slice of Parmesan cheese from my house in London or for an oatmeal pap such as our Susan mixes. A saucy baggage with white tucker at her chin and a swishing skirt did engage my eye, but against temptation and my lady wife I fell upon my marmalade.

We sit in council. Find by inquiry that there is in this city a church of great repute with a steeple that outtops Paul's in London. Much amazed, as I had supposed that Paul's be highest from Land's End to the Hebrides. Nor can I contrive how so small and mean a city that might be contained loosely between Charing Cross and Drury Lane hath need of any mighty church. Did put my thumb upon my nose in sign that I be smoked in jest. Comfort myself that the building be stretched by ignorant and boastful yokels and that it will blush and dwindle at our entrance. Question the bouncing lady at the office wicket and learn that the church is built absurdly in the gothic style and not in the newer Italian fashion that now happily prevails in London. And I find it fitting that religion, which has its place no doubt, should cloak itself outlandishly in this rustic town and dud itself like a country grandmother who never travels beyond the market.

We resolve, however, to see this vaunted church to learn first-hand by contrast the progress of our time. But if any curate or shiny verger think to

set it alongside Paul's, I'll tell him that which will disjoint his nose. Salisbury is but a sprinkling of crumbs to London's Loaf. Give a great penny to the wench who served us, then rub my teeth upon my napkin and come away.

Look at yesterday's paper of news that is down from London to see what plays I miss at Drury Lane and if there be any gossip of the Dutch fleet that doth haunt our coast. But my wife do so fidget for a start and peck at me that I spend but an hour upon the paper. The inconsiderate creature then ran for her bonnet and kept me a good five minutes to set it straight.

Bawl at the doorstep for chairs, but find them unknown in Salisbury; and so afoot to our inconvenience. But Lord there was a time when we always walked through poverty, which I often remind my wife when she takes on airs in company. It doth remove the silly rustle from her silk to tell how she once, poor jade, was used to rise at Sunday dawn to wash our clothes while I rested easy.

There is an ancient smell in the narrow streets of Salisbury that makes me again homesick for my parmesan. The Avon is much behind the Thames, as I expected, and showeth no manufactories on its lazy banks. Nor hath it a single wherry up or down, or any garden for sporting in the evening to hold a candle up to Vauxhall, whereto myself and Mrs. Knepp of the King's

House in Drury Lane hath often been so cozily together. Such fine people walking, and ladies under mask dining in arbors! Cheese cakes and syllabubs! What merry times I've had when my wife doth think I sweat at Whitehall! I persuade her that the Privy Council holds me when I frisk with sweet company that doth make me young. Lord I've sung "Beauty Retire" for an hour on end with Mrs. Knepp for treble snug beside me, floating home at cockcrow. But I tell my wife it be weary business about the Dutch.

Being now come to the Cathedral close we enter by a gate that must once have been a part of the city walls and do find ourselves in a pleasant sunny grass plot of many paces. And here to my shame, despite my contrary knowledge, I confess an admiration of the steeple, thinking it a fine bit of gossamer that is not as silly as I thought, but with wonder chiefly how men be found to straddle so dizzily among the clouds for its completion. It were a task as slippery as to furl his Majesty's great sail when the wind is stiff. And certainly the steeple is fashioned with a pleasing contrivance that must move one deeply who is unacquainted with the better work in the recent portico at Covent Garden. But I question again the propriety of setting up anything with so much labor that is distant a whole day's journey from London, and think the money would have been better spent if a new bridge had been thrown across

the Thames beyond Chelsea for convenience to Vauxhall Gardens, which would reduce the journey by a penny. White daisies and yellow buttercups are scattered in the grass of the close, giving the turf an unkept appearance. Pick, however, a posy for my buttonhole and permit Mrs. Pepys the same, which is much cheaper than buying them on Piccadilly.

The church inside, although of prodigious length that tires the eye, is quite narrow and is dwarfed by Paul's which hath a stouter waist. It is a slim Swede against the fairer thickness of a German maid. A verger tells me that the great tower weakens and that plans are ready to lay a buttress at the base to hold it steady. The gothic style, I find to my comfort, is always fetching loose and doth engage a constant labor or it topples. I prefer that the stones be laid flat-foot so that their pressure doth insure the whole, rather than they be stood on end in a wavering balance. This I tell the verger to hush his tiresome praise up one aisle and down.

There are several bits of glass of the thirteenth century and of this he was inclined to boast, but I disjoint his nose by pishing at it. Admire myself the gayer paint of the modern windows and commend to him my own glazier in the Strand who makes a pretty shepherdess for the window of my library. Much of the older glass was knocked out by Oliver Cromwell. Have no liking for the

wretch, who hath lately been dug up and discarded from the Abbey, but chuckled at the verger's horror.

Did wander among the tombs of many saints and bishops who lie atop in stone, but time hath so nibbled at their noses that their likeness be quite gone. One, a lady of complete face, reminds me again of Mrs. Knepp—that saucy lady of my acquaintance who doth sing and dance and take me to her dressing room—but nothing of this to Mrs. Pepys who thinks she holds me to her apron string.

Then to the cloisters—pretty but drafty—and I did sneeze three times which drove me for my health into the warmer sunlight. Beg a cup of water and take a bitter lozenge which will ward the cold until I come to a tavern for five fingers of a surer remedy.

Two pennies for an offering at the gate; but I grudge it not, for traveling is expensive.

In a shop nearby saw a neckerchief of a color that took my fancy and I put down a great pound for it. My wife fastened on a stomacher at seven shillings, but I bade the poor wretch lay it by for thrift and be content with what she hath. As a sop did commend her tabby gown which she made herself.

We came arm in arm across the town and I did inform her on the sights, for she stews in ignorance. The silly creature, however, sulked upon the stomacher and rallied me for the pound that I had spent, with many names that I do in char-

ity forget. At last, weary by her talk, I send her ahead with orders for my lunch—a tansy of cream and eggs—and buy privately for Mrs. Knepp a plated trinket—5s—which the pretty dear will think is gold.

It seems that an ancient monument is situate near Salisbury by the name of Stonehenge. I was disappointed to learn that it stands in ruins, but nevertheless we decided to give it a hasty look. In general it is better to clear the ground of its decayed incumbrance and set up modern buildings, and our time is to be much commended for its diligence in this. There is scarce a ruined abbey that hath not become a profitable quarry for needy cottagers. I do think it does much enhance the value of a village if some wreckage be near by to ease the cost of building; and I have known a whole range of necessary stables, pens and coops to be erected cheaply from a silly church that totters.

And there are other ruins much extolled on a hill at short distance which is called Old Sarum. So I took a hasty lunch despite the weakness of my digestion, and engaged a carriage at great cost. My wife, on promise of no mention of the stomacher, I take along.

As we left the inn the buxom creature at the wicket beckoned to me, whereat I sent my wife ahead. But she did only ask whether we stayed the night, telling me it was the rule to take a half

crown extra when the room was not empty after lunch. But I cajoled her with light merriment and took her promise that the half crown might be held in question until our return. It is by this thrift that I have laid up goods to support my age.

Tucked myself in a robe that quite warmed me but to my discomfort fell short around my wife, and rolled out of town in fine state with much craning for the sights. But it be tiresome in a mile or so and presently I fall asleep, but my wife did shake me for my snoring, which flatly I deny. And so to bickering, till I promised her a bonnet for the winter. God keep my memory of this!

The hill at Old Sarum is surrounded by a wall with an entrance through a tavern, and this did somewhat revive my spirits. Did cathedrals take the hint it would mend their empty seats. I took a drink first for pleasure and then a posset of sweet metheglin for my health; which presently I repeat to be on the side of safety and to cure the wheeze that I had contracted in the drafty cloisters. I smack my lips and pronounce that at last I be on the way to health. Nor was I churlish when the serving wench came trotting with the jug again, but bade her fill my cup that I might pledge the King.

Mrs. Pepys was now engaged upstairs where ancient laces were displayed—a weakness that is common to her sex. And yet I knew it to be but a harmless pleasure, for there was not a penny

to her purse, nor could she fasten any credit against me, as on the Strand. Mrs. Pepys, being now upstairs, I did observe that the wench was comely. And with my ear upon the steps against misadventure, I did commend her on the ringlet that fell across her shoulder, and bade her sit by me. But our pleasantness was broken by a creaking of the stairs and for safety I pushed her off and put my face inside my cup. Yet it was something for remembrance of Old Sarum. Women are hard travelers, and next time I leave my wife at home for her rest and comfort.

It seemed a pity to leave the jug for nothing better than a ruin, but Mrs. Pepys was set most obstinate, so we trudged through a meadow on a stony path. Nor will I deny that the day had brightened by the drink and that the hills rose in prettier color than I thought. My wife did take my arm that I might help her on the slope, but we lurched against the wall; whereat she nagged me about the jug.

Many workmen about with pick and shovel, vile and sloven to the nose. Learned that the digging now in progress hath unearthed the foundations of Roman, Saxon and Norman buildings. Must brush up a bit next winter and learn who these Saxons were. If they be related to the Dutch whose fleet lately plagued us in the Thames and fell afoul of Rochester, will call the day much wasted; for they deserve no better than the hangman.

Poked with my stick at Roman ruins laid when Cæsar was alive. Despite my better judgment, a place of great interest. Have seen the play of Julius Cæsar, and though Marc Antony seemed the better orator, have no doubt that J—— Cæsar was a man of parts.

Fell into converse with a mason who overlooked the work and found he had once lived in Stinking Alley and had seen our London players, which raised him in my esteem. He commended much a piece called Richard the Third when Mistress Gwynn did dance in pretty trousers between the acts. Lord I saw the play myself with Mrs. Pepys but she did cool my interest by wanting three oranges of Moll at 6d each and sucking them noisily when sweet Nell was on. So send my wife home by chair alone on pretext of a Privy Meeting and talk with Mistress Nellie at her dressing table in her smock and paint. I kiss her and a mighty pretty soul she is. The Privy Council sat late for I took her to Doll's for oysters, which crimp my purse.

This mason told me much about Old Sarum, but to my regret it went out of one ear as fast as it entered at the other. I must buy a handbook at a stall and con it against my neighbors' questions on my return lest they shame my ignorance. It be God's mercy none of them have come to Sarum, so I can speak in looser sureness.

As we came out I was much concerned that

Mrs. Pepys should see again the laces displayed above and I did offer her a whole crown for her choice, but she took me by the arm until we were through the tap and set me in the carriage, where I sulked in some distemper. More soberly I begin to think she shall go without her bonnet. She will have to iron her last year's ribbons and be content. And so to sleep as we trotted on toward Stonehenge, filled with peace and good resolution for economy and thrift.

Much fretted, however, at this waste of time in coming on to Stonehenge, as the ruins are not worth the visit. The stones are set in a paltry circle and are so tumbled about and in such disorder that I wonder they are not builded fresh. A fine breezy site, no doubt, for coming in the evening, if a pavillion could be raised and music and trees for shady walks. *Puella pulchra ambulare con meo.* No roof at all is left, but our driver says that this it never had—doubtless a jest, so I laugh; for I see no need of walls unless they be topped against the rain. It is not known who set the stones but they look older than Staple Inn on Holborn and I do think them so.

Our driver was quite stuffed with talk and he had much to say how one great stone was once an altar, and how the circle lay so that the dawn of midyear fell upon it; but I marked him not and for want of better amusement I scratched my name upon an empty surface and tried my hand at verses.

Sam'l Pepys announces here
He'll give Stonehenge for a pint of beer.

I gather that Stonehenge was erected by the Celts, but I care little for the Irish, which is the most troublesome part of our dominions. A most wearisome excursion. Nor is there any tavern handy.

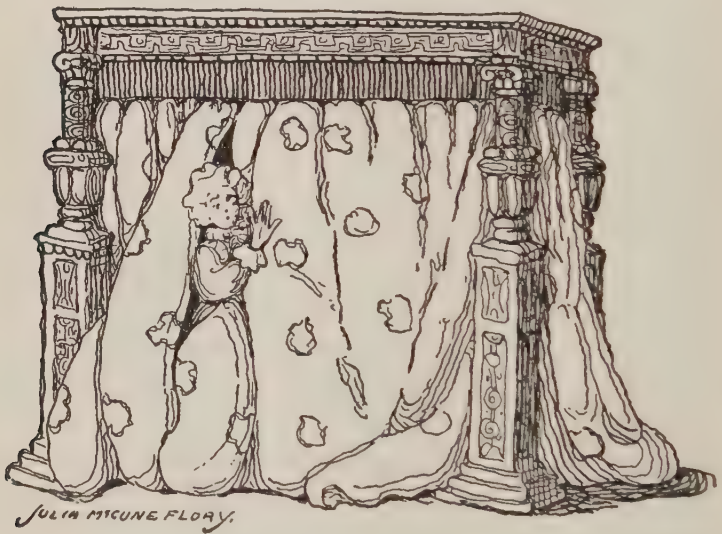
It rained on Salisbury Plain and by God's mercy I fell afresh to sneezing. So for my health and protection we stopped in a near by town for neat brandy all around, in which my good wife joined. Then fell to jokes and merry singing on the homeward road. Warmed by the brandy I give her the gaud I brought for Mrs. Knepp. I am consoled it be only plated, for it was a toss that I buy gold.

It had been my hope that we might this night take in a theater and see how the rustic players stack with London. But this paltry village hath nothing of itself and doth rely only on filthy actors who travel with a wagon. And none of them this night. The streets be without any lamp or flare and must wait upon the moon.

So jotted the day upon my diary, which I keep in cipher against Mrs. Pepys, a most curious woman who sometimes doth rummage to my disadvantage. Then for an hour I practiced on my flageolet made for me by Drumbleby's the pipe maker, which does consist of having two pipes of the same note fastened together; so that I play

on one, and echo it upon the other, which is mighty pretty. But my wife hath no ear for music and toward midnight, having rolled and tossed, she ask me to desist for dear God's sake. And so I desist, but sulky for her selfishness, for I was coming nearly to holding on the tune.

Threw my boots with a pretty clatter in the corridor, then pinned my bed curtains for fear of draft and so to sleep.



And they smoke strong pipes that warm their noses.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE VALLEY OF THE WYLYE

JOHN and I play a game to his profit and satisfaction. As often as I have a great cold penny I drop it down his back inside his shirt. In this way I add a mite to his fund for postage stamps and do it with an eye to my own enjoyment. Mostly these coins jounce through and fall upon the floor, but sometimes they lodge in his inner mesh and only rattle out at bedtime. If a penny has counted short his expectation eases the task of getting him off to bed. In this search at taps he is not unlike Queen Wilhelmina.

"Queen Wilhelmina had a trick
Of eating oysters with a stick.
Her gown's cut low and not too tight,
And those that slip she finds at night."

Salisbury dislodged a sixpence when Gingerale hung his trousers on the bedpost, which swells the town to a bigger circle on his map.

Next morning our heading was toward Bath. We had been in some debate in this as our first intention had been to ride into Devon through Shaftesbury and Lyme Regis. I had once been in Lyme Regis and I looked forward to pointing out its sights; for this, almost above a first discovery, is the chief joy of travel. A stone mole runs into the ocean and with its crooked finger it beckons to fishing craft in time of storm. At evening old sailors sit on the mole and mend their nets, or string them up to dry. And they smoke strong pipes that warm their noses. A stone parade lies along the sea and in the season tourists walk up and down and spend their money in trivial gambling and small theatricals. I recall a trombone that suffered with a violent catarrh. It was followed by a bawling fellow who boasted that his troop was "late of Drury Lane," and listed the crowned heads that had beheld their genius. There is a row of shabby cottages where folk from larger houses cramp themselves in August to bathe in the open sea. But if you are better than your fellows you choose the hotel at the top of the winding hill with a garden looking on the ocean.

And I wished to see Shaftesbury, which is an ancient town at the peak of a rolling country and is forgotten by the world. It lay once on the

coach route from London to Exeter, but now the railway follows the easy valley and skips the town, which sits above with idle folded hands like an old mother whose children have gone from home.

But the map of this southern course to the west was patched with the brown of weary hills, whereas the road to Bath lay in a level that was but flecked with pink. Pink is steep enough at the end of afternoon when no inn appears, so we chose Bath.

The day was another of fine cool weather with a clear and sunny sky. Where was the rain that one expects in England in the spring? Sometimes at night I awoke to a gentle patter, but only at Cadnam were we forced indoors. Yet the country was freshly washed at breakfast and came sparkling from its tub.

The first town was Wilton where carpets are made. Wilton House is of Elizabethan days but the duchess did not expect us and we pedaled on. Here Sir Philip Sidney wrote some of his Arcadia, but this did not excite me as I have not read the poem and still hope to escape. Shakespeare is said to have acted in As You Like It—himself, not a picture—in the great hall, but that is a fact just learned so we traveled ignorant and happy.

All afternoon we cycled up the valley of the Wylye, which is famous for its quiet beauty of hill and meadow, through Great Wishford, Langford and the town of Wylye. The river is just big enough to turn a mill wheel and we sat on a stone

bridge while the Green Feather sketched the town's jumbled roofs. Below the bridge a mill pond lay black and silent with a slow bubbling and lazy swirl of water, and I fell to thinking it was a witch's

The town's jumbled roofs.

caldron stirred with an unseen malignant stick, seething with dark mischief. But around the corner and from behind thick shrubbery there came children's laughter and the click of croquet balls as if witches were a happy circumstance.

I have found that it adds to the zest of travel if one buys the places that he likes. This, of course, must be managed thriftily without the payment of actual coin and I am now possessed of a number of estates whose variety fit the changing season and my wavering mood. On the easy terms of fancy I own a house in Maine, purchased from a steamer deck, because of its collar of foam upon the rocks and the black pines beyond. Several small estates upon the Thames are mine, with a punt and cottage added to the bargain, and two children, that I adopted at once, offhand. I once purchased a rare old mansion in Bermuda with cedar beams and a garden behind the dining room, but only my fancy became the lodger. And here and there I own a mountain and a lake. So, unvisited and unseen, I bought the house on the Wylye for its swirling mill pond and the pleasant sound of its children's voices.

We were tired and hungry when we came to Codford. The inn here was not of the attractive kind that we had met in Surrey, yet it seemed sufficient, for a weary eye is an uncomplaining traveler. The landlady was a decent creature and at first glance her house seemed indifferently clean, so we unstrapped the luggage from our wheels. After dinner I went into the bar and to start a conversation I asked a man at my table to tell me the difference between a pub and a private bar. It is from the selfsame counter that drinks are

served and from the same bottles with unequal price, but a partition cuts the counter into half and the tapster plays at peekaboo on one side and then the other. The man, however, regarded me as a lunatic for not knowing, and I must assume that the difference lies in social station. Here the squire may drink for a shilling, and here a laborer swigs the same mess at a sixpence only.

There was a rattling of cups until ten o'clock —a sleepy rather than a drunken sound as if the folk in the pub sailed off on a drowsy sea of beer— and then our landlady locked her drinkers out of doors. Presently she appeared in her bonnet and informed us that an errand took her to a near-by village. She had, it seems, no servant who slept upon the premises, and would we guard the house until her return at midnight?

My couch was hollow in the middle and was a nest instead of bed. Nor did a thin mattress keep me from a mesh of button hooks beneath. I slept on the edge of it, for it seemed the cleaner part, and twice I lit the candle at an unrealized suspicion.

A solitary charade of Humpty Dumpty.

CHAPTER XXV

TO BATH

THE following morning before breakfast I walked about the town which lies pleasantly in a single street along the Wylye. It is a noisy runnel that might be crossed on footstones, and, except where a dam collects it in a pool, it could support no bigger navigation than the shallow playthings of a child. Trees bend above the water and I fancy that here the painted

galleons of October float like a brave armada under scarlet sail.

I now waited for my breakfast and the Tweedledums, and to show them how funny I could be I perched on the top of the wall that jutted from the inn where I offered myself in a solitary charade of Humpty Dumpty. The wall was easily scaled at the rear, but the view in front showed me perched at the alarming level of the second-story windows; and how I clambered up was at first glance as hard a problem as the apple in the dumpling. When I put my mind on it I can be quite silly, but I did not pitch myself off head-first to give all the King's horses and all the King's men a chance to patch me up.

After a sodden breakfast of a worse than usual sort, we left for Bath as our objective for the night. One must say Bath with a long A, like the bleating of a sheep. To pronounce the word in our western fashion is to invite incomprehension. And all day we pedaled on to Ba-a-ath and took our instruction in the sounding of the vowel from woolly creatures that held their schoolroom on the hills.

Our road lay through Heytesbury, Warminster and Woolverton. It was at one of these towns, when squarely opposite a bicycle shop, that I discovered a puncture in my tire; for the road had been newly surfaced with sharp flints. It was Sunday and the shop was closed. Presently a neighbor's head came out of an upper window and plat-

tered itself on the casement like a local John the Baptist. The head, however, had a gullet down below for it directed us around the corner where we found the bicycle man at dinner. He told us to lean the bicycle against his door and go to the inn for food and we would find it mended when we came for it. He was as good as his word and we made our afternoon start without delay.

At four o'clock we lay off for an hour at Farleigh Castle. It stands above the green valley of the Frome, with a slope of woodland and meadow to a tiny flow of water on the stones. Not much of the castle is left—a shattered tower, a line of broken walls, a chapel and a great gatehouse that is moderately preserved. This stands with massive towers and is evidently ignorant that all defenses to the rear are laid in ruin and that even a charabanc can snap its fingers and go around. A legend persists that a lovely lady was once imprisoned in the strong tower and that she would have starved if the country folk had not tossed fruits and bread through the window of her dungeon. They "brought me," she writes "to my great window in the night such meat and drink as they had, and gave me for the love of God."

The castle dates from the Norman Conquest when the great William gave the village to one of his followers, but a detailed history of its masters were as monotonous as that part of Genesis where Hams were begetting Canaans. Let it suffice

that in the early years of the fourteenth century the Hungerfords came into the possession of the Manor House of Farleigh and refashioned it a castle. A Hungerford fought with Henry the Fifth at Agincourt and it was he, not Westmoreland, who wished "ten thousand of those men in England that do no work to-day."

"Let him depart; his passport shall be made,
And crowns for convoy put into his purse:
We would not die in that man's company
That fears his fellowship to die with us."

Farleigh Castle held for King Charles in the wars of Cromwell. It is now but a shell, and grass grows at the crannies of its lazy walls.

The chapel is a museum and an interesting one. But the custodian was so strict in his discipline to trippers that presently we resisted some very precious mummies in his crypt and came outside for air.

Beyond Freshford our road came out high above the valley of the Avon. In that valley, several miles to the east, lay Bradford where we had hoped to see its Saxon church; but it was behind us and it would have taken a wagonload of Saxon churches to turn us back.

From Freshford all the way to Bath the road follows the top of a steep and narrow valley with an occasional glimpse through the trees of the Avon at the bottom. Perhaps nowhere was the road more lovely—or was it regret that our trip

by wheel was to end to-night? Beyond Claverton the valley broadens enough to hold the village of Bathampton, and then in a mile or so we had our first view of Bath itself. It lies like a deep pool of buildings between the steep sides of the valley and is fed by runnels of houses tumbling from the hills.

Neglecting the hotel of ancient flavor we put up rather grandly at the Empire with a sitting room and bath, and a great senator to take the order for our meals. A ghost, likewise, as in Jermyn Street, prowled in at dawn but fell sick at our small display of tweeds. I fancy he held them off between his scornful thumb and finger, and felt abased that he had shrunk to such a vulgar company.

But our cycling trip was done and the next day we dispatched our wheels to Guildford and fetched back from the station only the straps that had held our luggage. The Green Feather remarked at our arrival that she was as melancholy as if we had sold the family horse and had brought the harness home.

CHAPTER XXVI

AN EPISCOPALIAN CHAPTER

I HAVE left undone those things which I ought to have done, for I have pedaled without prophecy across England in this year that is fresh from the losses of the war. I do not know whether she stands at the edge of ruin or whether, after years of rest, she will come again upon her feet and tread in the steady rut of what we are pleased to think is progress and build a thousand new stacks to soil the air. There are enough prophets sailing westward on the sea—tourists, investigators, bankers, teachers and journalists—bringing inspired words to easy ears.

I did talk once with a cobbler of Liphook and asked him whether his country were going to the

bowwows. There was a change, he answered. Large estates near by had come to new owners and had been cut for smaller tenants. Will it be better so? I asked. But he shook his head and told me he preferred the older way. And the other tradesmen, I persisted, do they, also, regret the change? But the cobbler had talked only with the greengrocer and the butcher, and they were of his single mind. This is hardly sufficient evidence for a general statement that the English countryside is Tory.

There is doubtless a social justice in this shifting of wealth and power from the ten thousand to the fifty million, and if the change shall lessen poverty and increase the common opportunity, it must be classed as progress. But the beauty of the countryside is aristocratic; and democracy, until the centuries shall train and mend it, is a destroyer of beauty. The arts have always been the product of leisure supported by wealth. It was so in Athens under Pericles, in the thirteenth century whose cathedrals are the witness and in the days of the Italian Renaissance when the age of the despots blossomed best in art. It seems that when the people lift themselves and get their economic rights housing and sanitation take the place of beauty.

Is truth, beauty; and beauty, truth; and is that all we need to know? Perhaps there is a beauty above that of park and hedgerow—the beauty of

justice. But what is justice? And what is truth? asked jesting Pilate, and we still pause for the reply. Are material and social progress and happiness the same? And does the greatest happiness reside by necessity in a broad democracy? What is this image that we worship? What is this thing that is called the vote? It has ended many abuses of the past—at a price, for it has raised the plain and sheared the mountain. It will end many more abuses. But political power spread wide is not the parent of entire happiness, for nothing is which is external; for happiness rises from the heart. These questions whirl wildly in the head. Their answers are beyond us—beyond the purely social or political thinker, although he claims an universal field—beyond anyone but the broadest philosopher. I am myself but an unthinking wire that sends a question.

I have no gift for a shrewd cross-question, but in a lazy fashion I did talk now and then with those who came athwart our travels. From several villagers I learned of poverty that had followed competence. One man had owned a horse and had tilled his patch of ground, but the horse was gone and his garden was choked with weeds. Two ladies of chance acquaintance had lost their brothers in the war and with fortune swept aside they had remodeled their house to be an inn; but their very gentleness and generosity, I fear, will wreck their investment. We met other women

who had lost their sons and husbands, and here for a moment I caught a glimpse of England's tragedy. There is many a shop now whose proprietors once owned their carriage. Although the surface of English life seems the same to a heedless tourist, it is often hollow underneath and a stoicism conceals its loss.

Many of the old owners of fine estates have sold them beneath the hammer to the great war's profiteers and this new generation practices stiffly to be a country gentleman and is pitched from its unaccustomed hunter. Castles are let on easy terms and strange voices echo in their sounding halls.

For the traveler there was no shortage of food —the same food that England has always had, good meats but monotonous and rather unsavory vegetables and desserts. England still lives on cabbage in its many forms as in the days before Germany went mad. And I saw nowhere in the country an evidence that poverty quite pinched the stomach. I write of the countryside, yet in the cities—as in London—I remember no poverty or solicitation quite so poignant as in nineteen fourteen when it seemed that half of London stood upon the curb to beg a penny for a box of matches.

But how can one be sure—especially a tourist, whose eyes are distracted by a thousand sights? I know no more than that England was lovely

in the spring and that its trees and hedges were in gorgeous blossom. These things I know, and the long twilight after dinner when the village pattered on the stones in a melody that held more happiness than sorrow.

From London to Bath we did not see a motion-picture theater. There is none in Winchester, or in Cowes where lazy folk might fill the hall. There is none in Bath, unless it be tucked obscurely in a side street. Dull people of the south of England can have only a dim acquaintance with Charlie Chaplin and Douglas Fairbanks who have so generally lifted our taste to better things. There are pictures, however, in the larger towns of the Midlands and the north, and on other trips I have observed that American films of cowboy life are favorites. The pictures that send Akron into little squeals of excitement thrill also the towns of the Black Country.

There is a slight decline of good manners in city streets. Porters, bus men, chauffeurs, have progressed with the time and they protect their gain by an assertion of equality. Almost the last of the old-fashioned waiters has disappeared; although a restaurant here and there remains whose serving men suggest a kidney pie in the ancient accent of solicitude and hospitality. But even with the general decline, manners are still much better than in New York; and a tangle of motors in London is unsnarled with a good nature that

leaves one in amazement. The English seem never to have learned how profanity unties the traffic. But in the country we saw no bad manners except our own.

The prices of the countryside have advanced within the last decade, but hardly so sharply as in America. Steamer fares are, of course, high; chiefly because we insist on swimming pools and orchestras. And if we must travel like copper kings we should not grudge the price. The one-cabin ships are good enough and are still within the purse of the prosperous professions.

But for a man of moderate circumstance, waiving the ocean fare, cycling in England is cheaper than staying at home, much cheaper than equal time at a resort in Maine or in the Adirondacks. I intended to keep a sordid record of my expense and set it down for the exact guidance of others. But my resolution now paves hell. As I recall, a necessary cost for bicycle, fees and room and board was hardly more than five of our contemptible dollars a day. And, furthermore, the countryside offers little opportunity for that extra extravagance of cities—souvenirs and gifts, theaters, special dinners, the frequent taxi and the hundred temptations that drain the purse. At an excellent inn like the Royal Anchor in Liphook—with Queen Anne thrown into our bath—a double room, as I recall, was about fourteen shillings. Breakfast was two and six, lunch about five shillings, while

dinner was seven or eight. As a shilling by depreciation was hardly twenty cents, the day ran up to less than five dollars, which is much less than a room alone in any of the motor hotels of New England or New York.

We had been told that English roads, neglected through the war, were in bad repair; but we did not find them so. They were equal to the roads of Massachusetts and without the frequent detours that send one around Robin Hood's barn. It is not a point of honor, as with us, to destroy a road to its full width or to ruin it in May for a new pavement in October.

I have traveled in England by train, by motor, by foot and now by bicycle, and I choose the bicycle. The exercise is almost the equal to the work of walking and it has the advantage of a thrifty speed, which, however, does not as easily become one's master as a motor's speed. On a bicycle one is likely to reach his destination early in the day and he is not driven out so sharply after breakfast.

The walker, also, is likely to slight the village where he spends the night through sheer fatigue; but the cyclist becomes rested by a change of muscle and takes his evening stroll refreshed. A walker, moreover, is more dependent on the frequency of villages and must plan carefully lest night catch him between sufficient beds. It is but a sad romance that wraps the stiffness of middle age and sleeps beside the road. Was it really twenty years that

Rip Van Winkle slept in the chilly mountains, or did he merely feel that much older in the morning? If I should sleep on the hard nubbles of the ground I would rise three score and ten, with a flowing beard; and I have no doubt that Stevenson, in the green caravansary of the forest, wrote his poetry of night with rheumatic fingers.

A pedestrian, moreover, is cramped by economy of luggage; whereas a bicycle carries without burden a proper change of linen, a camera, a guidebook and the maps that are so requisite. But a motor is a very different horse and, although it has its special pleasure and advantage, I am myself rather a snob against its cushioned sybarites and inclined to lift a scornful nose. I am too old and brittle to bounce all day.

And now we have come to Bath, the city of the English centuries, and our bicycles are dispatched to Guildford. There is much tame adventure still before us while we circle by motor into Devon. I shall leave you presently in Jermyn Street where our landlady rollics with her tipsy friends.

He fell to be a swineherd.

CHAPTER XXVII

A CHAPTER FOR SATURDAY

A TRADITION persists that Bath was founded eight hundred and ninety years before the time of Christ and in this wise. A certain man named Bladud—"the great-grandson of Venus"—was once heir apparent to the British throne, which in those days was no better than a great bowlder out of Stonehenge. And he fell sick of leprosy, cherished then by fashion like our high blood pressure and hardened arteries. He was banished from the court and wandered to Somerset where he fell to be a swineherd.

And now, having given his leprosy to his pigs, he observed them plunging into a hot stream hard by the sty. He ceased his coo-baa for a closer look. On the farther bank his pigs were wallowing out, whole and clean. Whereat he broke the

Celtic custom and straightway took a bath himself. And was cured. All this, I fancy, happened on a Saturday; hence our pretty custom. So he founded a city, took to himself a beautiful wife, became King of England and the father of King Lear in the most approved method of fairy tales. Later he journeyed to the east, practiced magic and met the distinguished men of the Old Testament. "He had many fast friends and among the fastest" was the prophet Elijah. This origin of Bath, running so to pig, was, as you might expect, of special interest to Gingerale.

A gesture of a thousand years and then the Romans came to England and built a village at these baths with a weight of structure that shows how solidly their civilization sat upon the island. This is constantly a surprise to the uninitiate. He thinks of Roman occupation, remembering it in Cæsar's wars, as military—as a force that moved across the land and drove the natives to subjection. For him the Romans built bridges only for their marching armies and dug nothing but trenches for defense. For him it is a race of soldiers with sword and pike. And consequently he neglects the centuries of establishment, the flow of peaceful arts, the routine of easy life, the structures built for luxury and pleasure, the long generations that tilled the soil and housed themselves in cities until they grew native to the country and knew no other home than England. Four hundred years it was that

the Romans lived in England—a longer space than separates us from Shakespeare—and yet without instruction we think of them as no better than brief military squatters.

A gentleman of Bath or York or Lincoln, if he were so lucky as to visit Rome, went almost like an American who goes to London. He had no need to hang his head as a raw provincial; for he had his baths, his palaces and public walks, arcades against the sun and rain, his monuments to emperors, his massive buildings to administer the Roman law. Some of this has been unearthed, but it is likely that much more lies hidden and covered by modern pavements. It was only a few years ago at London that a Roman boat was found in the mud of the Thames, while excavating for a large abutment of the County Hall; and similar Roman relics may be found in any ancient English city that shall choose to dig.

And so, here at Bath, we may see their masonry, the steps and tessellation, the piping made of lead that served as conduit to their pools, the stone of statuary and ornament that was set up when the Cæsars ruled the seven hills and all the world beside. One may sit in fancy on a marble bench with a gentleman in toga, or sweat with him in his sudarium. He may thrust his head through an opening of the wall and see the water steaming from the earth as once it bubbled up for a Roman governor—as once in older days it flowed hot

for Bladud's pigs. For a thousand centuries nature has stoked the furnace and set its kettle on for ailing and soiled humanity. As on Ægean shores where the gods once bathed, so here at Bath one listens to a ghostly pageant in the dripping rock.

The Roman remnant of Bath, buried for centuries beneath the familiar pavements, though long suspected, was not uncovered until seventeen hundred and twenty-seven; and it was not until seventeen hundred and fifty-five that the great bath was laid bare. Then little was done until the year eighteen hundred and seventy-eight when the Corporation conducted extensive excavations.

Roman Bath was not a great city like York or Colchester or Lincoln, yet its yield of Roman vestige is the greatest of all. This is explained by its distance from the busier centers of population where there was a wider destruction of the old to supply new needs, and by the enduring stone that is native to the district. The remains of Bath, moreover, are bedded deep to reach the healing water and they permit a city to be built on top without dislodging the lower strata; and thus they have been preserved for future excavation. There was a Roman wall around the town, although its course is only guessed, and the foundations of the gates will be undiscovered until some later spade shall dig them up.

But Bath, as now we know it best, is a city of the eighteenth century. It had some glimmer-

ings of importance in the days of Charles the Second who paid it a visit and drank the "killibeate," which must have then had a "strong flavour o' warm flatirons" as it had later to Sam Weller who attended Mr. Pickwick; but Pepys mentions it as a somewhat colorless city of second-rate importance, scanty company and primitive pleasures. "And by and by. . . ." he writes, "much company come; very fine ladies; and the manner pretty enough, only methinks it cannot be clean to go so many bodies together in the same water. . . . Carried away wrapped in a sheet, and in a chair home; and there one after another thus carried (I staying above two hours in the water) home to bed, sweating for an hour. And by and by comes musick to play to me, extra-ordinary good as ever I heard at London almost any where: 5s."

But it was in the year seventeen hundred and two, when Queen Anne came to take the waters, that the fortunes of Bath really rose. A procession of townsfolk, alive to this great honor, went forth on horseback with horns and garlands to the limits of the county to bring in with fitting ceremony their dumpy queen. And from that time forth the city was a place of fashion and set about to build itself to a necessary accommodation.

The real history of Bath is coincident with Beau Nash, and nearly everyone has read his life written by Oliver Goldsmith. Nash was born at Swansea in sixteen hundred and seventy-four of a fam-

ily of modest means, and having been rusticated from Oxford for looseness and intrigue, he bought a commission in the army. Presently he tired with that part of it which was not lace and buttons, sold his commission and entered the Temple to study law, supplying his needs then as in later years, by the fortunes of the gaming table and the avoidance of his debtors and the sheriff. When the inns of court desired to honor William the Third, Nash undertook the conduct of the ceremonial pageant and with such success that he made himself a kind of fame. A knighthood was offered but by good sense declined.

Nash visited Bath about the time that Queen Anne took the waters, liked the place and threw up his London occupation. So assiduous was he to the trivial pleasures of the bath that presently fashion made him a king—hardly a king of dusty laws and ancient precedent, but a potentate to rule society in its softer hours; to pronounce upon their entertainment; to adjust the order of the minuet, the precise crooking of the knee at the salutation of a lady; to set the length of flounce and sleeve; be arbiter of boot and lace; to prescribe the finger best for taking snuff; and to be proprietor of all ballroom scandal.

Just to what suffrage his election lay I am not informed, but surely no vote was cast. Rather he was thrust forward by common consent to assume these trifling burdens.

About this time a slander rose that nearly spilled the baths. A certain Dr. Radcliffe, who was physician to Queen Anne and quite stiff of neck with learning (did he not tell his sovereign her ills were of her fancy and refuse her the comfort of a pill?) a certain Dr. Radcliffe, I repeat, urged that the waters quickened the evils they were said to cure. In the current phrase he threw a toad into the spring, and became as unpopular in the town as Ibsen's Enemy of the People, who tried by honest dealing to wreck his village. The wrath of the innkeepers ran high. The fashionable seamstresses were up in arms. Milliners, fencing masters, tailors, bootmakers, those with rooms to rent—everyone who subsisted on lease and fees—burned with hot alarm. For a while it looked as if the carriages of golden gout would bounce to Tunbridge where other waters beckoned, and that Bath would be neglected and impoverished. The dust that moved west from London was in danger of turning south to cure the inflamed toe of easy living. In this dire excitement Nash suggested that the ugly toad be charmed by music and he opened a subscription for an orchestra to play beside the waters. And, sure enough, in the squeak of the merry fiddles, Bath regained its power to cleanse the gout.

Before the time of Nash, Bath had been but a slovenly and rustic village. Now and then, it is true, a great carriage had jounced a duchess

across the hills to seek a cure and had carried with it some echo of London fashion. But the water's

Burned with hot alarm.

benefit could scarcely lighten the tedium of her banishment or hold her long from the glistening excitement of the Strand. A pellet and bath are

good potions in their way but boredom works against the cure, and the long day must be spiced with pleasure lest convalescents sicken.

There were no resorts in England then, as we understand the word—the ocean with its bathing

No persons are quite so idle as convalescents.

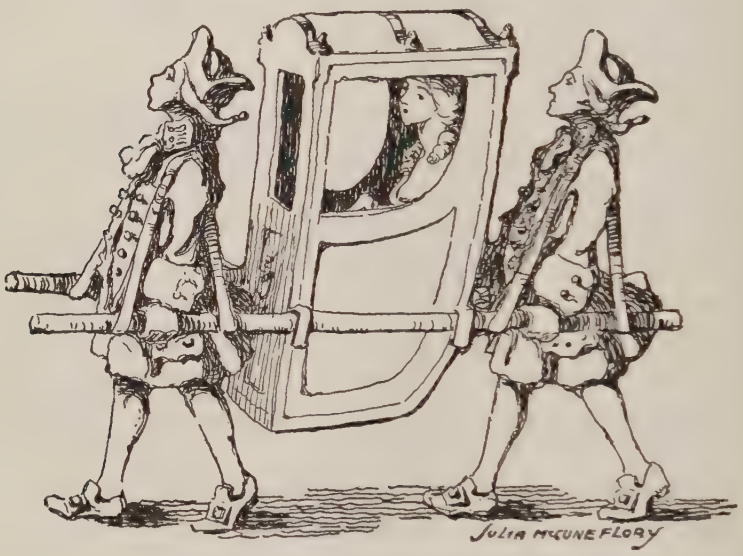
and gay pavilion, the mountains with horseback exercise and golf, the coast of Devon, the breezy Peak—and perhaps it was Nash who invented the thing or at least improved its germ. It was he who discovered that no persons are quite so idle as convalescents or in need of so constant entertainment. And so he added to the sickish morn-

ing draught a pinch of laughter and scandal, intrigue and gambling, dancing and ogling; together with that touch of exclusive fashion that would commend it to a world that was unhappy out of silk and lace. He is the grandfather of the German Spa, of Aix les Bains and of our own dear sanitariums that circle around the ballroom and the sulphur cup.

The waters had been encased in hasty shanties, so he built a pump room in the Italian style that was then in vogue. He laid a broad parade so that society could strut and take the sun in company. He started a theater which in time was second only to those of London, where in the season the greatest actors were glad to play. He constructed an assembly room so that visitors could meet for dancing and for gambling. And by a shrewd advertisement from ear to ear he announced that all the celebrity of wit and wealth and family were the patrons of the healing waters, so that lesser folk would flock in imitation.

Bath itself responded to these hints and improvements, and within a few years its broad streets were lined with handsome fronts; circles and crescents were laid out and colonnaded terraces overhung the town from the surrounding hills. In those days a person of social ambition might as well have neglected Rotten Row when fashion took the air, have regretted an exclusive ball of Vanity Fair, as to be without a house at Bath.

This magnificence is now a bit tarnished, as if a toad were again inside the spring. Name plates on many doors show the wealth of reputation that once lived within, but the hand of death has passed above. A decent routine of humbler life exists where once a duchess wavered between



A sedan chair trots again with nimble legs.

silk and lace, where dandies in red-heeled slippers sipped their morning chocolate. I am better fitted, perhaps, to take part in a world of fashion that is but an echo, and bits of English novels and smaller bits of history are card enough to admit one to the mad rout that once dwelt upon the crescent. It is therefore without any touch of

melancholy that I dream upon the streets. To the eye of fancy a sedan chair trots again with nimble legs to take a lady to the bath, and embroidered coats and flounce and panier grace the walks of memory.

Nash proved to be a despot in all the trifles that loom so large to fashion. He prescribed the proper hour and costume for the bath and laid almost a prudish hand against familiarity, except as it could sport in private and ogle behind a decent screen. He appointed the time for drinking the waters and its small ritual. Here was an hour for shopping, for a fitting at the tailor, for fencing lessons, for lounging in the bookshops, for news from London in the coffeerooms, for walking on the South Parade so that fashion should not waste in solitude. Here was the hour for tea, and here the dinner hour.

It was his nod that set the nights when great balls were held and the Assembly blazed with candles. In his conduct of the ballroom he was most precise. From six to eight o'clock eight minuets were danced with a sequence by his regulation. All the company sat about the room while he led out a favored lady and, this dance performed, another. And then he appointed successive gentlemen to choose a partner and then a second partner. It must have been a stupid business for those who were not asked, and many a faded beauty must have caught the vapors from disappointment.

Nash laid down a rule that the elder ladies and children must be content with a second bench against the wall, "as being passed or not yet come to perfection." And many a proud pillow of uncertain age was

"As being passed or not yet come to perfection."

wet with tears. Country-dances followed when all might dance if they could win a partner to their selection, and faded dames puffed stiffly in tight stays. At the stroke of eleven, sharp as Cinderella's warning, the ball was done, lest dissipation spoil the waters; and even when a princess asked for encore, it was denied.

Society at first was inclined to neglect the

exact strictures that Nash laid upon its costume, and gentlemen appeared upon the dancing floor in boots. But Nash broke their infringement by bidding them lead their horses inside and raised a general laugh against them. A duchess once appeared in something that was called an apron —hardly a housewife's apron—but certainly a fracture of high society. But Nash snatched it off and threw it in the lady's face. Great heavens! In the face of the Lord's anointed! The face of ten thousand dirty acres! A horrid shudder ran around the room and a dozen beauties must have fainted.

At this kind of interference there was at first a quarrel or so and Nash was obliged to fight, till presently society acquiesced and rallied to his support. He forbade the wearing of swords, and it is said that this omission spread to London and somewhat abated the nuisance of the duel. He laid rules for the governance of servants so that they would not ruffle and be noisy in the lobby as they waited with their chairs. And for some forty years, until laws forbade public gaming in seventeen forty-five, Bath continued at its height of fashion, and Nash was its powerful King. No salary was paid Nash, but he drew a livelihood from his skill at cards. And folk of wavering hold upon society might well think that losses in his company strengthened their footing on the ladder.

During the recent great war with Germany, when continental waters were closed to English

gout, Bath once more flickered with a touch of light, and some flash of its ancient days came back. But now again the candle gutters.

Some echo of its golden past lingers in the bleak pump room where trippers are now the only drinkers of the water. Here is the platform for music and we hear the squeaking of the fiddles that once charmed the evil toad. Through that door, if we close our eyes, we see a petticoat and silken ankle alighting from their chair. Here comes a patched and smiling beauty with a footman stalking at her heels with fan and salts and smelling bottle, for it was an age when gentility needed now and then a fainting fit. That ringlet at her ear has been toasted by a prince. That ribbon has moved the rhythm of a sonnet. What poetic frenzy has her stocking roused! A row of ogling gentlemen are eager to speak a honeyed compliment. Eye, cheek and ringlet; ear and nose and foot! Their beauty is apt coinage for a song to be sung beneath her casement when the moon shall set the night.

Here comes a lord with a star upon his coat, a general who has fought in France, and here a withered dame who seeks to hide her years beneath silk and powder. And at that window we may see the bather in the pool below with prudish covering but with a wandering eye of invitation. And then, alas! a charabanc clanks in from Bristol and lands its dusty cargo; and so the vision fades.

Literature is filled with accounts of Bath society in those golden days. Most of the heroines of the eighteenth century with the slightest pretense of politeness went down to Bath for the customary round of flirtation under a heavy chaperon, and most of its authors at some time or other passed a gay summer between its inclosing hills. Name any author of the time who escaped prosperously from his Grub-street garret and it is ten to one he was of the company of the assembly room, and that he cast a plot or so in Bath. From one or another of these, like puzzle pictures that are laid in bits, we may piece together the detail of the times and clothe the streets in a proper garment.

The road of fashion into Bath was by private carriage. It was a three days' trip from London and for purposes of display as well as a guard against highwaymen it was well to travel with a full complement of servants. Hounslow was a nest of thieves and any inn might contain a band of cutthroats. On arrival at Bath the bells of the abbey rang and footmen ran out from every lodging to learn the arrival's name and station. If he happened to be a duke or was high and stiff of family quite a shiver of delight spread through the town, and dowagers groomed their pretty daughters for a killing. Presently he was serenaded and threw down coin to fit his wealth and pretense. Pepys, we have learned, dispensed five shillings, but for a lord there was a heavier cost.

Being now established in his lodging, perhaps on the following morning, the master of ceremonies waits on him to instruct him in the amusements of the place. If the newcomer is strange and unacquainted with the city he offers him escort to

The road of fashion into Bath was by private carriage.

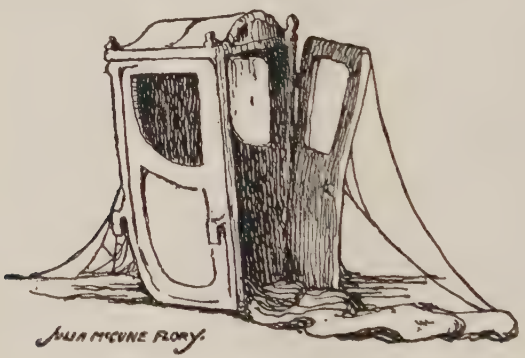
the centers of resort and a lesson in polite observance—hints for costume, the hours of bathing, the time to drink the waters, the calendar of balls, the best quarter of the town for the purchase of this or that in order that he may meet fashion at his best. If he is rusty in the minuet the mas-

ter of ceremonies will condescend to name a teacher to repair his awkwardness. He will whisper to him his own wig maker, or the tailor who has the custom of a prince and will match the cut and fabric of his cloak. Or a fencing master is given in an exchange of snuff. With the manner of one who grants a favor the master of ceremonies now collects a subscription to the orchestra, to the pump room, the baths, the gaming hall, the balls and a fee for the bell ringers of the abbey. And then, having subtracted as many guineas as the stranger's equipage seems to warrant, he sweeps a bow at the doorway and departs.

Roderick Random came to Bath to marry himself to an heiress. The good family of Mathew Bramble all drank the waters. Some of the charming ladies of Jane Austen and Miss Burney spent their season on the South Parade and blushed in the fashion of the times. It was just across the river that Bob Acres fought his duel with Sir Lucius and stood sideways against the bullet. In its first draft the School for Scandal began nowhere but in the very pump room where its sharp gossip was a commonplace. It is said that the building remains in which Sheridan at twenty-three wrote his brilliant comedy. Bath's candles are burned out. Its ghostly men and women tread the echoing halls of memory. Its laughter, its merriment and gossip are heard dimly through the thick curtain of the years.

We saw the usual sights in our two days' stay in Bath. We heard service in the abbey which is so full of windows that it is called the lantern of the west. We drank warm flatirons and looked for Bladud's pigs in the Roman bath. We were pulled by a broken horse to a cemetery on top of a hill and I seem to recall that I declined to climb a tower. We read a great many bronze plates that marked a former tenant. We walked on Pultney Street and crossed a bridge that was lined with shops. I spent an hour in Gregory's bookshop and was nearly caught at closing time in its maze of rooms. I made, also, a special pilgrimage to the Crescent to see the pavement where Mr. Winkle ran in flowing nightshirt from the jealous Mr. Dowler, whose wife. . . . But one must read the whole excitement in the book.

Then we engaged a motor for a farther journey into Devon and Cornwall.



The great church kneels upon the grassy brim.

CHAPTER XXVIII

HURRIED MILES

THE next day we scaled by motor the high pink south of Bath and traversed the Fosse Way where once Roman villas stood. And then we climbed across the Mendip Hills. There were pretty views all along the route but in a motor the brain is exposed to the flash of too quick a shutter. Down from the hills we coasted into Wells and at once lost our hearts to this glorious and unpretentious city.

It is a town in which, if its guarded society would admit him, one might wish to pass his declining age and fade out in the sunlight of the cathedral close. At least I hope that some day I may return

to Wells and put up in lodgings for a week. I shall stroll each day through the small jangle of its streets, lounge at its modest bookshops and turn in at the cathedral gate to lose my common haste in the quiet confusion of its ancient buildings. I have in mind a pool that looks all day on wandering clouds and at night is dotted with the yellow stars. The great church kneels upon the grassy brim to behold its beauty, and there I shall sit and let the rumble of the world go by.

Though Wells is an aristocrat from oldest days, there is no pretense of the past, no signboards or fingers pointing to Roman occupation, no boast of King Arthur and mighty battles. At Bath and Chester there is a braggart tone, the sights are ticketed and they challenge one against neglect; but Wells sits in better modesty. I doubt whether its pavements rattle with so many charabancs and whether landlords are so quick and hard of eye; yet the city has still the touch and fashion of the ancient centuries and its cathedral sits with wrinkled beauty in gardens of endless spring.

Glastonbury was next upon our hurried route —a Benedictine ruin that is almost first in beauty —but I have used my adjectives and sit bankrupt. Nature has wrapped its scars with grass and vines, and rooks circle its tower in chatter of better times.

Beyond Glastonbury we skirted Sedgemoor where James Monmouth, pretender to the English crown,

met his overthrow, and then we entered the Quantock Hills. It was at Nether Stowey at their foot, passed with a fleeting glance, that Coleridge and his young wife settled down to live when his Pantisocratic scheme with Southey came to grief. They were to have been equal and happy sons of nature on the banks of the Susquehanna in far-off Pennsylvania. Neither of them had ever seen the Susquehanna but it had a pretty sound that seemed suited to experiments in communism; for such endeavors are always possible if three thousand miles away. To my local and accustomed ear the syllables of the Susquehanna have no prettiness, but Stevenson, traveling as an emigrant to California, also dwells fondly on the word. Southey had decreed that his band of poets in a bliss of mutual understanding should labor in the fields each day during an hour or so for the common purse, and that song and verses should fill the afternoon. But the scheme was shipwrecked on a quarrel between Coleridge and Southey, and departed to the limbo of lost dreams.

And to Nether Stowey Wordsworth came in seventeen ninety-seven with his sister Dorothy to visit Coleridge. But Coleridge wandered too pleasantly about the hills with this same Dorothy, and Sara lost her enthusiasm for her guests. It was here, also, that Coleridge, rheumatic with the damp, first took to opium for relief. He had read in Purchas' Pilgrimage of a Tartar palace of the

thirteenth century, and Kubla Khan was written under the spell of the drug. He was accustomed, also, to walk in twilight to the Bristol Channel and to watch the ships sailing to the open sea in the phantom mist of night; and this was the inception of the Ancient Mariner.

It was at Nether Stowey that Coleridge and Wordsworth wrote the Lyrical Ballads to sustain the expense of a walking trip to Devon where now we go by motor. These Lyrical Ballads were regarded in their day as rather a terrible piece of poetical vandalism and the Monthly Review worked itself to a frenzy of abuse and ridicule, yet they contained the Ancient Mariner and other poems that have grown since most respectable gray beards. And this, of course, is another excuse that our own wild poets offer for their experiments against sense and rhythm. The Lyrical Ballads appeared in the year seventeen ninety-eight and ended the stilted manner of poetry that had flourished in the eighteenth century, and now we likewise have grown to be old fogies.

This side of Dunster we had a first view of the Bristol Channel and at Porlock we climbed a long stiff hill to the upper country. Toward the top we passed a group of cyclists who had walked and sweated for an hour. We were now on the edge of Exmoor in a scene of amazing beauty. To the left was a wide view of rolling and treeless plains. This district is so swept by wind and storm that

only a low and clinging growth can subsist upon the top, and the houses cuddle in the valleys and listen to the windy tempest that runs above. To the right the country tumbles down the rocks to the channel, and here and there an inlet offers a hint that it may be the gorge where the sailor men of Treasure Island put into harbor for loot. A dozen successive buildings, sheltered below the cliff, are each the Admiral Benbow where blind Pew came tapping with his stick.

We were now in the country of Lorna Doone, and the village of Oare lay somewhere across the moors where Lorna was married to John Ridd. I once explored for a sunny afternoon the valley of the Doones. The sides of the valley, that rise so dizzily in the story, are as gentle as may be and a child might roll from top to bottom without harm. The terrible water slide up which John Ridd climbed with danger to his neck is but a lazy trickle down a bowlder the size of a dining table with a pool at the bottom for drowning nothing larger than a puppy. I have read that interminable book once too often and I nod at the remembrance. The pen of English novelists, trained to a peaceful countryside, goes mad upon the hills.

We came to Lynton for the night and put up at a charming hotel with a garden that sloped to the edge of the cliff. To the right the great Foreland stood out to sea—brown rock with an orange tint, in the season, of yellow gorse and purple

heather. This the sunset lighted into gorgeous flame. In this garden one might sit for endless tea and clotted cream.

Somewhere below us in a valley that cuts down through the wooded hills Shelley lived after he had been a patriot in Ireland. And the music of the stream must have instructed his verse to a softer

Endless tea and clotted cream.

and more patient melody. From Lynton, which is high on the rocks, a path follows below their crest and keeps above the channel; and one might toss an apple down the funnels of the Bristol steamers. The giddy path ends in the Valley of the Rocks where once more we find Lorna Doone when she came to pay a visit to the witch. Far off, the coast of Wales lay upon the sea, and at night it winked and flirted across the water.

We went to Clovelly by charabanc which was

once a village of smugglers. It is quite tramped upon by trippers and, like Falstaff's camomile, it thrives. Every morning an excursion boat—with a baked apple in its funnel—puts in from Bristol. And each house upon the stairway of its single street hangs out its sign of postal cards and clotted cream—which are both very good things and not to be despised. If it be the season for strawberries I'll let Clovelly's sights go hang and sit content with an eager spoon. And yet the town is too thick with trippers and one steps on them to get about. It is only when the steamer has departed in the middle of the afternoon and the village has settled into peace that one can direct his thoughts from the pirates of the present to their gayer grandsires who once sailed the Spanish Main and pushed their victims from the plank.

And then we motored to Tintagel, where an excellent but ugly hotel stands on the rock and rattles in the storm. A ruined foundation of an ancient building clings upon the precipice and is locally affirmed to be the remains of King Arthur's Castle. And this is as it should be, despite evidence that may face the other way; for Arthur would be the first to claim it. No cliff in England, when the storm and fog drive in, is quite so wild and terrible. It is man's last bastion against the sea.

An old lady, who is rather a hag in her dirty way, keeps a candy shop at the foot of the up-

ward path and holds a key that shuts it from trippers except by the payment of a sixpence, as if the rock were hers by direct descent from Arthur. I climbed this path once in a driving sleet and it was by my teeth I held myself from falling; yet in milder weather one makes the ascent, as Bædecker would say, in comfort and in safety. Beneath the cliff, running from an inlet to the open sea, are caverns that are dry when the tide is out. Here, if anywhere, one might dig for buried treasure.

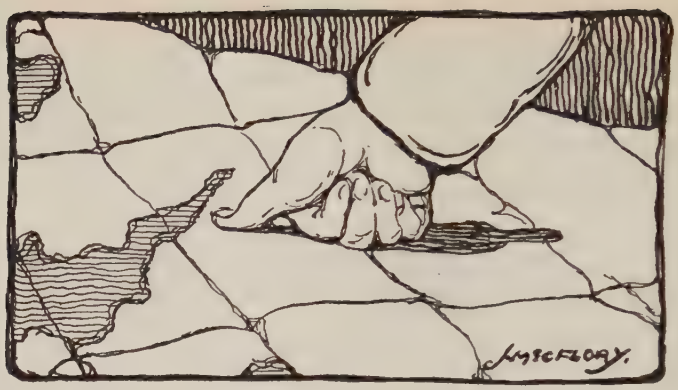
Nor may I neglect an old building at the cross-roads in Tintagel, for it is such an agreeable clutter of antiquity that some day I shall write a play of smugglers and lay it there. The Green Feather borrowed a sheet of wrapping paper and sketched the room—its fireplace with a hot-cupboard in the stones; a second story, used as bedroom, that hung exposed on a kind of balcony; a door to a smoky kitchen. These things you may yet see on Broadway with an electric flash to woo the crowd.

We motored next across Dartmoor to Plymouth, where we stood on the Hoe and looked for the Armada. For us in special trip the Mayflower weighed its anchor with its load of Cabots, Lowells, hall clocks and spinning wheels. We also drank mugs of ale on our hotel's spotted tablecloth, where dingy red paper on the walls kept our spirits down.

This rapid travel makes me breathless, but we

yearn for the devilfish in Jermyn street, for our landlady's noisy piano, the theaters, the shops and city lights. We have one more stop and then our journey is completed.

"One foot up and one foot down—
That is the way to London town."



CHAPTER XXIX

FOUR THUMBS NORTHEAST OF BRISTOL

OUR last port of call was so delightful and so remote from tourists that I withhold its name lest I do my mite toward fetching in the charabanc to mar the stillness of its streets. I throw the town unchristened on the map with so loose a gesture that none but a native shall recognize the place. This is the method of story-tellers who drive their ship vaguely in a storm before the treasure island comes in sight. Or on land they bribe the easy signboards to a lie and coin a name to throw a pilgrim off. A poet rhyming in acrostic, does not so carefully conceal his mistress. It is a shrewd angler who hides the pool where he made his catch.

No one really knows just where the stately pleasure dome of Kubla Khan actually stood, or to

what ocean the Ancient Mariner sailed. Their author, like Tony Lumpkin in his cups, gives a false direction—"It's a long, dark, boggy, dirty, dangerous way." When Stevenson was asked how to reach Samoa he replied vaguely that one sailed from San Francisco harbor and took the first turn to the left. Or you remember how De Morgan starts a certain story. He knows the street where his hero lived, but how to find the slippery spot? It is near Tottenham Court Road—or is it Soho? Perhaps it is Oxford Street that rattles around the corner, but is it the second turning or the third, and to the right or left? And so the tantalizing fellow leads one roundabout, peeping here and there at doorways, but dismisses us in ignorance.

On this honorable custom I shall write of a gracious village in the west of England, but tell no more than that it lies four thumbs northeast of Bristol. I leave in darkness whether this measure be my own broad thumb or the slimmer digit of a lady. Are only etchings dulled by sharing them in common? May not I with equal profit collect lovely villages from the middle ages and lay them away in secret memory like a miser, gloating on their sole possession?

There is a railroad that links this village to the world but its infrequent train is of unhurried temper and we may suppose its lineage traces to the stagecoach. The locomotive is not impatient to

be off, as on a greater road. It never starts on sudden and fretful business down to London. Rather it lingers here and there for gossip and carries a birth or an elopement pleasantly across the countryside. And if it sees an old lady's cotton umbrella bobbing down the hill, it makes a jest of the time card and stands about until her ticket can be bought and the dear soul boosted in. A family horse is scarcely so reluctant to begin a journey.

Our reasons for visiting this village were casual and pleasant. The Tweedledums have a gardener named Tom, and Tom has a sister who is postmistress at the certain four-corners rather less than a wide thumb to the east of our nameless village. I may not affirm that our trip to England was solely to convey Tom's respects to his distant family, but it was the chief business that took us cross-country up from Exeter.

But a gesture first toward Exeter itself where we lay over for a Sunday! It is a town only partially spoiled by progress and possesses many buildings that link one to the past—aristocratic structures to be sure, like the castle and cathedral, but also dingy commoners that house the trivial business of the present. These do not stand so thick as in Winchester, but the High Street still holds an echoing fragment of antiquity, and the district around the close rests quaintly in the eye.

Yet my memory is not wholly pleasant, for it

seemed a padlocked city. On Sunday afternoon, having rummaged in the guidebook, we set out

And the dear soul boosted in.

to see the castle whose ruins run back to the Norman Conquest. It sets in a public park but the gate was closed and locked. We suspected that

behind its heavy front there were green and open spaces; but, although a great crowd moved upon the streets and seemed to itch for a wider runway, we were all debarred from their enjoyment. The castle lives in close convent on a Sunday and not even its towers are permitted to peep above its castle walls.

So we went to the cathedral. Locked! A spicy verger, who suffered from indigestion, told us that the building was shut till evening service and then trippers might only pray and listen. I suppose there are occasions when tourists are allowed inside, but I have passed through Exeter three times and always the sharp brotherhood of vergers has kept me out. A diagram is shown in Muirhead, but it is a dull substitute for the shadow of the actual vaults. We did go in for evening service, but we sat cramped and stiff against the wall; for the verger had his cold eye on us and a great stick to beat us if we looked about and broke his pious rules. Our hotel was an agreeable but crippled building and the upstair floors slanted up and down in crazy disregard like a drunken contractor's dream.

Have you, my dear sir, journeyed on the byways of an English railroad? It is easy travel to London by the whisk of an express, for the metal spokes of traffic lead always to the hub, but cross-country is a harder matter. I first consulted the boots, who is an inn's Brittanica of knowledge. He started at the task with easy confidence; lay-

ing an ink well on the map to mark our destined village, for it had the habit of getting lost. Its particular specks mingled with a hundred others and I remarked lightly that Mrs. Bartholomew was probably a careless housewife and had opened her screens in fly time; but boots ignored my jest.

Presently we located a train to Taunton and thence, by change to Bristol, but nothing on wheels connected farther. We then found a train to Bath, but there it curled up in the station for the night. It seemed simple at first to work north from Warminster, but the London express did not stop. And then Salisbury was on a route that left us stranded in the middle. For an exciting moment we thought we had found a train clear through, but it did not run upon the necessary Monday. Perhaps it had been drinking on the Saturday before, and still lay abed with icy bandage.

Finally I walked to the railway booking office and put my problem to the station master. He said he was an old man with a record of continuous service for fifty years and a great-grandchild in jumpers, but that no one before had ever wanted to visit this particular village. Was I sure that the Isle of Wight would not do as well? He knew a train that sometimes worked down in that direction, and Carisbrooke was highly spoken of—had imprisoned Charles the First and all that sort of thing. Or had I seen the Hoe at Plymouth? Francis Drake had once played at. . . . "

" Tom's sister " I interrupted, and I told him the simple story of the gardener out in Cleveland to whom we had pledged our word. His hard eye moistened—for he himself, he said, had a sister living in New Zealand; and were the places far apart? His sister was unmarried, and was Tom . . . .? Then, glancing at his clock, he informed me that in ten minutes his office would close its shutters for the day, but that I might wait and he would find me a train if it took till midnight. It is this bulldog grit that has built the British Empire.

It was in the fading English twilight of early June that I announced to my companions that on the morrow, with five changes and a jitney ride to boot, we would reach our village after playing puss in corner all around the island. Exhausted I fell to bed and dreamed of A. M. and P. M. and of S's that stand for Sunday, and ff's that mark a holiday excursion.

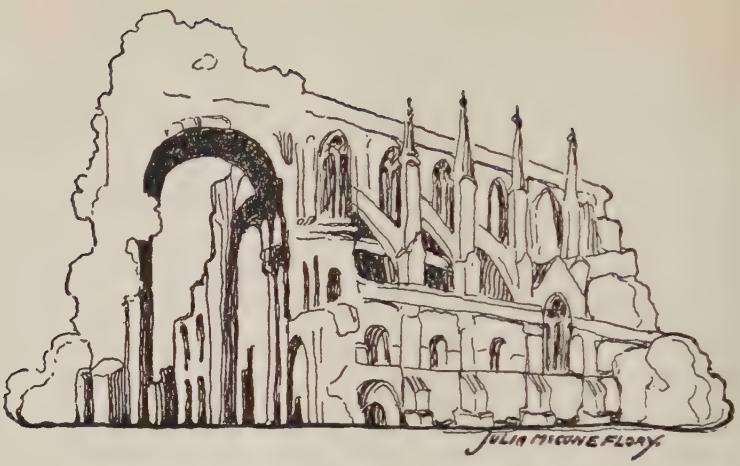
The next afternoon in exact accord with the station master's prophecy we alighted for our final jitney about the middle of the afternoon.

Our motor was of ancient date that did not dare to stop its engine for fear that the dear old thing might not have the heart to start again, just as elderly cab-horses fall and die if taken from the shafts. There it stood beside the platform with throbbing fenders. Its owner patted its restless bonnet with affection and assured us it could get

up a pretty speed and that all of its bolts and wheels were tight, so we climbed in and braced ourselves with luggage.

It seemed best to report at once to Tom's sister, and without difficulty we found the cottage at the crossroads. Cramped against the street was a general store, with a wicket for stamps and letters. She was expecting us and took us back to her sitting room, which was a homelike, cluttered little place with a piano and generous chairs. A vine of gay flowers grew up outside a casement window and nodded through the glass. While the water heated for tea she took us all about the cottage and upstairs, where her tall son stood bent and cramped not to knock his head. And to the garden next! Her husband had owned a horse but had lost it in the poverty of the war. He shook his head and was despondent for the future. Presently the daughter came in and played the piano for us, then tea and cakes were served. It was an hour of honest pleasure and a glimpse into the reality of English life.

At last we rattled off to find our lodging for the night.



The broken arches of the abbey.

CHAPTER XXX

FOUR THUMBS AND SO TO LONDON

THE Bell Inn stands near the high street with its wall almost against the ruined abbey. Half of it is reclaimed from the ancient Bishop's Palace that stood once inside the close, and a mark of Norman dogtooth still affirms its venerable origin. In the older part of the building two sisters live, with the newer wing fitted for public accommodation. Their family once occupied the whole, but the father died and the war killed a brother and reduced the fortune.

The room given to the Tweedledums was heavily timbered and its leaded windows were set in the massive stone of the twelfth century. The tracing of a Norman arch was flung across the

wall and inside its curve had been the fireplace of the Bishop's Hall, in days when it was worth one's time to be a churchman. The patter of the village as one dropped to sleep was the traffic of pilgrims to the abbey's shrine, and dreams leaped to far-off feast and revelry.

Behind the inn there lay a series of little gardens gay with the colors of early summer. Water trickled from a spout into a pool of lily pads and a snug pavilion looked at the sky through the broken arches of the abbey. The great walls of the nave cast a cool shadow like the shelter of an old tradition. Here a poet might muse on a lazy afternoon until words in pretty rhyme ran unsummoned to his pen.

I recall that part of the garden was hung with linen—bold immodest garments that the breeze instructed in the dance—and another part was set with dirty vegetables that did but beckon to the stomach; but these coarse things were sheltered by a hedge, and the farthest inclosure with its fountain and flowering walks was reserved for a poet's use. Behind the path a garden led down hill to a mill stream, crossed a bridge above the chattering water and mounted to the railway station. And on the ridge a church tower beckoned from the tree tops as if every day were Sunday in this peaceful country.

In front of the inn there was an odd assortment of upright stones. Their name has slipped

me, but they had capped the legs of granaries for corn to keep out rats. They were set like a tiny Stonehenge to invite curiosity.

At supper Gingerale was entertained by a metal cow which at first seemed pure ornament. But presently he discovered that when he wagged the creature's tail a bell was rung inside. Wantonly he fetched the waitress in, just for the pleasure of its sound. He nearly burst himself on ham, but this I lay entirely to the cow.

Our hostess suggested that we see the interior of the abbey after dinner, and she hailed the verger as he passed to bring his key. We found him waiting in the southern porch. He had been a gravedigger, until the war and rheumatism advanced his office. I had never met a man of his sober cloth and I had thought that such a sullen occupation might sour a man; yet here he was, brisk and happy. The dyer's hand may be subdued to what it works in, but this verger could have tossed up Yorick with a playful jest.

When we approached he was studying the rings of small stone figures that are carved around the abbey's entrance, and he offered to name each group from Adam through the flood to the Nativity and Crucifixion. So, with his blue old finger he pointed out the progress of the ancient world. Light from Chaos. The Lord Sits and Beholds. The Spirit Moves upon the Waters. Adam Digs. Eve—by a mutilation unmentioned in the Bible

—was without head or legs, yet she seemed to be making a good retreat from Eden. Sometimes the

A general primer for the village.

verger had to squint for a proper title. Noah Works upon the Ark was for a moment confused with

the Building of the Temple, but he came out strong and glib when Sampson Tears the Lion. He touched the stones with great affection. He was eager to fill a demolished gap. He so plainly exulted when Goliath was Slain or the Red Sea Safely Crossed. The old fellow was as picturesque as a century that is gone and I wondered if he might have lingered from the pages of the Spectator and have known Sir Roger in his youth. As for the stones of his narration, they must have served before the days of our modern schools as a general primer for the village. I like to think that mothers brought their children here and told them the story of the Bible when the stones were fresh and whole.

The abbey is off the crowded path of tourists and the verger had studied no drone of words. Now and then he waved a rusty key at a monument or relic of the past, or swung it aloft to show a curious carving. But he stretched no tiresome patter of St. Aldhelm or William the Chronicler, who are the worthies of the place.

The traditions of the abbey run back to the Danish and Saxon kings when the hill was encompassed by a wall. From a stolid guidebook I pluck St. Maildulf, a Scottish monk, who in six hundred and thirty-seven or thereabouts gathered a group of scholars and set his master's chair in a wooden chapel on the hill to instruct them in Roman learning. Here St. Aldhelm became Bishop and was the first Englishman to write

Latin verses. He taught "law, astronomy, astrology, the art of reckoning and the difficulties of the calendar." Here King Æthelstan was buried in nine hundred and forty-nine "with honor and decent pomp." Then the Northmen came, and one, bolder than his companions, was about to strike the shrine when he fell dead by an unearthly blow. Among all the neighboring monasteries this was the only one which escaped their sacrilege. In the year eleven hundred and thereafter a minster stood here "superior in size and beauty to every church in England" with a spire that topped Salisbury by many feet.

In these aisles at midnight one might hear the far-off tread of Benedictine monks. Ghostly shadows have hidden in the vaults through a million whirlings of the earth, but now our lantern brings them forth; and grotesque stone and carving grin from the hollow of the dusty years.

The building that now stands is chiefly Norman, with an imprint here and there of later times, a pointed arch or window of decorated tracery. It is a gorgeous suit, worn and out at elbow, that is patched with later fabric. Nine bays remain in their varied motley of changing style; but the choir, the transept and the crossing have fallen and disappeared. They were doubtless the quarry from which the town was built, and we must suppose that many an abutment or finial is lodged in the walls of neighboring houses.

Cromwell's cannon fired on the spire when the town was held by royalists and it rocked and fell that night. In the remnant of its foundation is left the pockmark of his bullets—a scar from the plague of war—and a stout door is quite peppered with them.

This is the abbey of the Mistletoe Bough—of the bride who locked herself in a chest.

"I'm weary of dancing now,' she said;
'Here tarry a moment,—I'll hide, I'll hide!
And Lovell, be sure thou'rt first to trace
The clue to my secret hiding-place.'"

The verger paused. "Then she ran off and hid, and they looked for her and never found her—for forty years, and then they found her bones. But the same family occupies that same pew every Sunday morning." And here the verger blew his nose very hard, and became brisk and happy.

It was now growing dark inside the abbey, and we went out to see the graveyard, for we could not neglect our guide's profession. I copied one insciption.

In Memory of Hannah Twynnon

Who Died October 23 1703

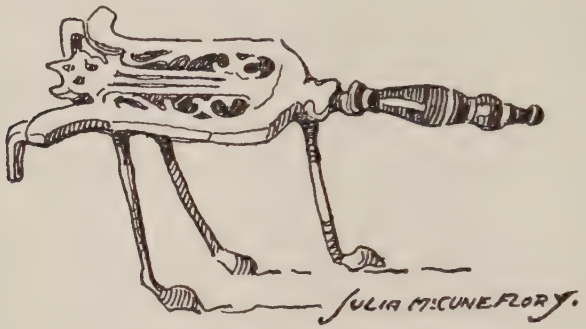
Aged 33 Years

In bloom of life
She's snatched from hence
She had not Room
To make defense:
For tyger fierce
Took life away,
And hence she lives
In a bed of Clay,
Until the Resurrection Day

A traveling menagerie—this from the verger —once exhibited in the village, and of course it is evident that the tyger fierce fetched loose. I had known that as far back as Shakespeare's day strollers had traveled with dancing bears ("as melancholy as a lugged bear") but I had not known that tygers were taken about the country. I picture the uproar in the village, the snarling beast crouched to spring, the scurrying into trees and houses, the running after pitchfork and blunderbus. And Hannah, with dishes washed,—or it may have been her Thursday out—had been so happy at the show. It quite chills me against the circus.

For what was left of the twilight we climbed a narrow winding tunnel of stone steps and issued

on the abbey's roof. I can think of no hour as peaceful as this on the topmost leads. We were at first solicitous lest we were trespassing too far on the ver-



That seems to walk in a hurry from the fire.

ger's time, but he assured us that he often climbed alone to the roof and spent the evening in contemplation. Before the darkness blurred the country he picked out each tower and village roundabout, and seasoned them with harmless gossip. Boy and man he had been a digger of graves until every family of the parish had at last employed him, but seldom have I met a person of such a brisk and happy gentleness. It was dark when we entered the Bell, but we sat till midnight in the summerhouse at the garden's foot, watching the passage of the stars across the abbey's ruined arch.

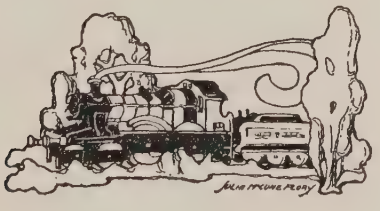
There were other sights in our secret village and some of them we saw after breakfast—a market cross of the sixteenth century, a street or so of shops where we bought a book that had been for

a hundred years a restaurant for worms. The Tweedledums purchased, also, a trivet for their hearth—a brassy creature on three legs that seems to walk in a hurry from the fire.

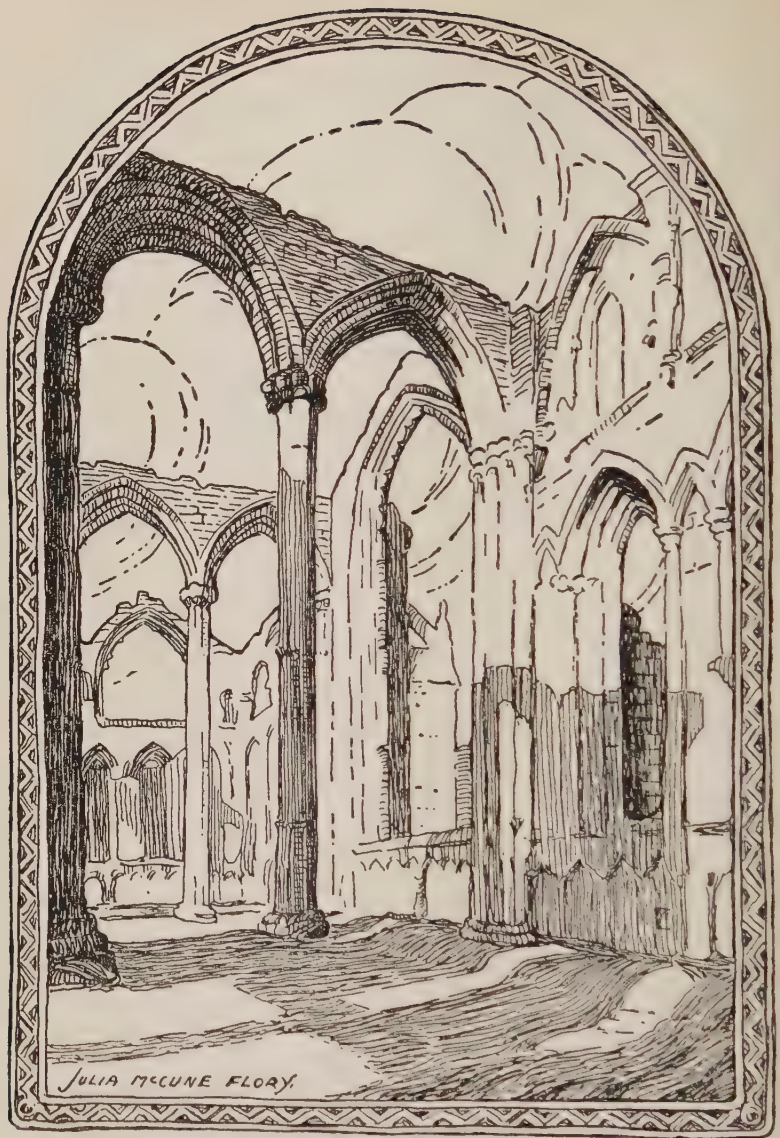
I have learned since that the house where Latimer lived still stands, and that Thomas Hobbes who wrote the Leviathan lived somewhere hereabout. His father was vicar in an adjacent town and was rather an ignorant fellow who liked cards better than sermons. "After playing cards all Saturday night, he went to sleep in church, and in his dreams announced that clubs were trumps."

But these sights that are starred in Muirhead I willingly exchange for a visit made, with my hostess as a guide, among the gardens of her acquaintance, and a search for ripe strawberries for our breakfast.

And then we turned our backs upon the abbey and packed our luggage. Our hostess led us down the zigzag path to the railway station and held the train while we purchased tickets. Our locomotive whisked its tail and trotted off to London.



Roads to the North



The loom of summer wove an azure carpet for the narrow corridor of sky

ROADS TO THE NORTH

BY

CHARLES S. BROOKS

WITH PICTURES BY

JULIA McCUNE FLORY

NEW YORK
HARCOURT, BRACE AND COMPANY

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I dedicate this book to those who drank coffee with me in the smoke room of the Mauretania—

CCC, MRC, JCB, Jr., RHC and GWB.

To the first three my friendship. To the fourth and fifth, my apologies as well. To the fifth a request that he show mercy to all slanderers, that he report me and my cause aright to Veronica and a dozen Georgian widows.

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Roads to the North

Morning in the Bowl of Night has flung the Stone that puts the Stars to Flight

CHAPTER I

OF DAWN AND THE START

Awake! for Morning in the Bowl of Night
Has flung the Stone that puts the Stars to Flight.

IT was eight o'clock on the morning of June twenty-second that I tossed a pillow with sweet precision across the actor's upturned face. I had observed his gentle breathing, to be now so rudely stirred—a fuzzy sound as when a smoker draws upon a pipe that's clogged. His mouth stood open to emit such pale

forms as drifted to his morning dream from the broken mooring of the night.

A gurgle of palate and feathers announced that another day had begun. Each dawn comes fresh from chaos. Each day is man's epitome. The actor, sitting on the margin of his bed (bare-legged, blinking in the light, unshaved, with tumbled hair), seemed not of our polished age, but rather a Goth about to smash the Roman Empire. He rubbed his eyes and gave me a

The moon and stars were snuffed and put upon a shelf

hard glance, as if I were a senator to be cleaved, and then it softened as he knew me.

"Izzatchoo?" he murmured in his native tongue.

"None other," I replied.

He scratched his head, as men in a cave did once to mark the dawn of reason. Then he slid into his trousers and the present century.

It was now apparent that the sun, old nature's man about the yard, had been up for several hours and had already done its morning chores. Last night's clouds

were swept aside. The moon and stars were snuffed and put upon a shelf. The roofs were freshly washed.

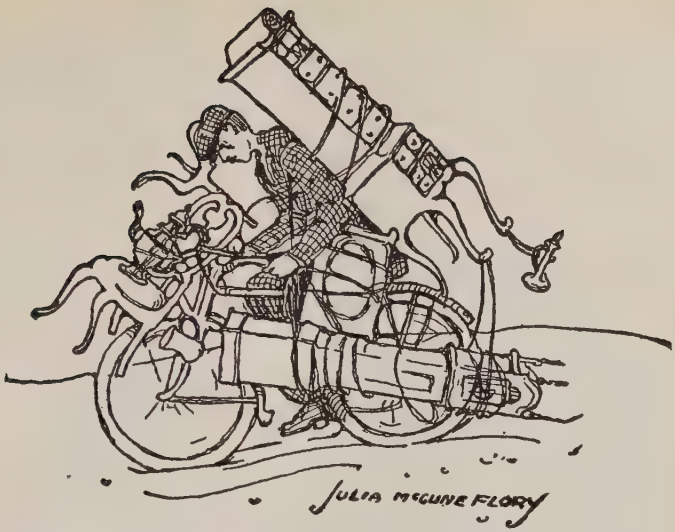
I opened the door and looked down the corridor. A young man in a bathrobe and a leprous towel sought that which is next to godliness. His slippers slapped

For those who washed scantily at home

softly against his heels. A maid ran on bent knees with tankards of hot water for those who washed scantily at home. An odor of bacon and kippers was afloat. In fact, even a stupid reader will perceive at once that our drama opens in an English hotel. With a squint at a window, he would know from stacks and rigging that we are lodged in a city on the sea.

"Hurrah," cried the actor, buttoned fore and aft. "This is the day we start."

And now, if this were really a play, a French parlor maid would dust the furniture. And she would talk with the family butler so that the audience would get the plot before the important persons entered. "What can be troubling the master?" That kind of thing! But I must do my own dusting.



You mustn't crowd the bicycle

CHAPTER II

I DO MY OWN DUSTING

Lend thy serious hearing
To what I shall unfold.

MY thought had persisted through the winter that when June came round I would seek companions and once more travel on the English roads. I had sat in a sunny garden of Pasadena where acacias were in blossom—beauty so delicate that Spring bore their yellow clusters to the altar. Peppers drooped above me whose scarlet berries jiggled in the wind, and pansies smiled along the path. But my thoughts had jumped the flowering hedge, the ridge above the Arroyo

and all the tumbled range of Rockies to sail a stormy sea and meet the fragrance of an English June.

On the margin of a novel that I read, as the plot dragged through its lazy hour, I had scribbled down a

To climb to the top of our whirling earth and look through space as from a tower

title—*Roads to the North*. There was shrewd persuasion in the sound. For it had seemed a worthy thing to climb to the top of our whirling earth and look through space as from a tower. On this pinnacle the east and west are neighbors, and a shivering north turns south.

Perhaps, with start at the Channel, by way of Wiltshire, the Cotswolds and the Midland, I might with luck and sunny weather cross the Roman wall, journey past the border of the Scots, until the running weeks would bring me to the Arctic Sea.

To stand at John o' Groat's and toss my fancy to the windy islands of the pole would be high ambition

Fresh from the bluebells of a wooded hill

for the vagrant months of summer. And mingled with the western odors of the orange and acacia there came to my memory the clean aroma of a furrow, a breeze fresh from the bluebells of a wooded hill, together with the sniff of English inns, the withered breath of ancient castles where legend roams a shadowed corridor—smells not to be commended in themselves, but fraught to an instructed nostril with the fragrance of the past.

A man with a single eye looks without perspective on a flattened world, and if one knows the present only he lives in a plain of two dimensions. For the past is a third dimension and it gives depth to what otherwise is shallow knowledge. England is history's mint, with its experience stamped to coinage for our use. I heard the crackling Druid fires of Stonehenge, the tread of Roman ghosts on Sarum hill, the chant of monks at morning mass, proud anchors weighed for Agincourt, revolution and strife that have echoed into law. I journeyed on the lazy footing of desire to fields where battles had been fought, to walls that scorned a siege, to the towns and countryside of a poet's dream. And then, with fallen book, I listened to the dusty clamor of the Midland looms, weaving for a hundred years the fabric of our present life—the roar of cities that have drowned the customs of the past.

He who has a plot and title has a book well started. With a pencil I put a flourish on the words like a sleepy schoolboy who draws an idle picture around his lesson. The wide Arroyo lay below and its more ambitious tree-tops were level with my eyes. A ridge of hill and then a mountain range stood guard upon the north—mountains that were scarred with restless roads that climbed from sunny land to feel a brisker wind above. And my fancy also clambered up, for England lay beyond the top. There I sat in this garden of the west until shadows, in the thickening light, came like pilgrims from the hills to crowd the Arroyo's broad caravanserie of night.

With luck and sunny weather I would travel. Of

rain my journal will say much as we proceed. Noah's diary through forty days of downpour was hardly more insistent on the weather. Despite the word of politicians, what the British Isles need most is a sun that sticks upon the job. More radical than labor, it strikes

A charwoman who comes of a morning to poke her broom briefly at the clouds

for pay without a stroke of work and lives on an idle dole. It is a charwoman who comes of a morning to poke her broom briefly at the clouds and then goes off to other chores. It is a tripper from a better climate who sails to England with but a tooth-brush in its pocket. It was doubtless known in the seeds of time

that a boat was needed on the British roads, that the Cotswolds and the Border were drenched in an universal patter. The Channel swimmers stayed this year at home and stemmed the foaming Midlands. But, like Noah's wicked neighbors, I was ignorant of gathering clouds. One reared at Billingsgate would lack the pith of speech to describe the English weather.

So I sought companions for the venture. There is an actor hereabouts, unknown to Broadway, but famous in our smaller circle. He is a young man with something close to genius, except in that Gothic hour just now when you met him first. I had thought with what pleasure I would hear him at Hamlet's lines in the Stratford lanes, or summoning the witches of Macbeth from Scottish moors. Like most actors he is of talent hot and cold that blows his mood like a windy weathercock.

He jumped at the suggestion. Would we travel by bicycle?—for he had been, he said, a marvellous performer. It was so agreed, and I pointed out our course upon a map. He rushed home in a happy frenzy to look up his béret and his knee-breeches.

Then George dropped in. He had planned for Spain, but wavered and fell. He resides in a white frame dwelling that was a farmhouse once, until the city swallowed the farm. A broken apple tree against the fence is the remnant of what used to be in lonelier days an orchard; and when the hungry city had gobbled up everything else, it was left, as we must suppose, for manners on the plate. A painted board at the street and two china elephants on the step announce that

George has antiques for sale. Inside, if you sit in any chair, you must brush off a precious litter; and the swishing of a coat tail is ruin. George's professional zeal is for antimacassars, spinning wheels and authentic tables, but privately he yearns for widows. He boasts of one in every port of Europe. Wherever you put a finger on the map, there is a Georgian widow. Yet his passion is of the cooler sort that runs to tea and muffins.

"There will be antique shops in every town," I urged.

"My china dogs are complete," he mused. "I can hardly hope to find additions to my collection of glass paper weights."

Then his eyes glowed, as when a bed of coals is ready for the popcorn. "I have it," he cried. "I'll collect samplers."

"And what are they?" I asked.

"Bits of fabric," he replied, "on which little girls used to practice needlework. They stitched pictures of Adam and Eve, with pious verses underneath. That's what I'll collect."

"Thank God," I answered.

George lifted his eyebrows with a question.

"I was afraid," I added, "that it might be spinning wheels and hall clocks. You might take on one or two, and perhaps a highboy. But you mustn't crowd the bicycle."

"And when do we start?" he asked.

"June tenth—on the Mauretania."

"Very good," said George. "I know the smoke room steward."

But he knows most of the stewards on the Atlantic.

George is slipping past his early fifties, but a jovial heart denies the years. He is of high-pitched speech; but that may be hypocrisy, patterned on the harmless Turk, to delude his widows. It is recorded that once at the opera he confessed to the weeds around him that he would exchange his Bristol glass for the manly voice of the deep contralto. Like many men of gentle temper, he affects profanity. As he is a connoisseur, he avoids common oaths and uses only those of rarer spice. But a book for sale among the innocent must eschew his salty reference to the saints and angels.

I had crossed the ocean once before with George, on one of those ships that is advertised as French from the very gangplank, and behaves as such. Montmartre floats back and forth. George's eyes open like a cat's when twilight wears, and their pupils are the scholars of the night. He had introduced me to musicians who went abroad to study—gay dogs who would not push their watches forward, but drank to fame on lagging New York time until the dawn came up at midnight. I recall a tenor who bubbled up in song and pushed a string of empty bottles through the port. Such conduct is bad in any place, but on the lonely ocean it seems a target of extra hazard. With a hundred miles of empty water roundabout, the lightning bolt of Zeus must itch to strike a sinner. I came off the ship at Havre a broken man, and I still remember moving through a mist in search of sleep.

This book is the Odyssey of George—his tempest-driven course across the seas of England. George

rises with a song, but its naturalness saves him from assault. He jests even at a British breakfast, and seems to relish cold toast and tea grounds. Another's plans suit his whim. He laughs when a joke is lodged against him. I doubt even whether the abuse of this journal will soil his temper. These are rare qualities and, if he be yet ensnared at tea and muffins, I shall congratulate the happy widow.

George, at my suggestion, set aside the thought of Spain. He borrowed a wheel and each morning, before traffic began, he practiced on the side street. It was a youngster's wheel, and its saddle gave scarcely room for his revolving legs, which scraped therefore on the handlebars. But, as George remarked, it was safer to be near the ground. In this I am at one with him; for I would myself be a horseman, if I could find a mount clipped short below the knees. It is the need of a ladder that keeps us out of polo.

Veronica is the factotum of George's household. If you have ever breakfasted with him, you will recall her cunning hand at griddlecakes. And in the summer, when trade is light and he is off in Europe adding to his litter, she runs the shop. George had concealed from her these early hours of practice. Yet her suspicions were roused by the hiatus between the splashing of his bath and his tardy appearance at the table. It was more than griddlecakes, therefore, that fetched her out of bed on the second morning to peep through the window curtain. There was George, pedaling lopsided up the walk, bumping now and then for security against the fence.

It was on the fourth morning, when he was riding with a centaur's grace, that he collided with the milk wagon. Little harm was done, but the old horse winked across its shoulder as at a comrade from the joyous nineties.

We have wiped the dust. The roads of England fret.

Southampton seems of a cleaner commodity than Liverpool or London

CHAPTER III

BAGS, BOATS, BAEDEKER AND BICYCLES

Shall we go see the reliques of this town?

WE had packed our clothing last night in three piles—a grip to be left with the boots for our return, another to be sent a week ahead to reinforce the journey, and a third canvas bag of size to fit the carrier above the bicycle's rear wheel. This last held but slim necessity—extras all around, except shoes. Laden, each of us, with the canvas bag, we loosed ourselves upon the town to find bicycles.

My journal must now be infected with description. Southampton is a brisk clean city with wharves for

its livelihood. The water front is thick with landing-stages, warehouses and ships in greasy docks. Nor can I see how these sleek creatures of the ocean can be content, so ringed about with refuse. With such clearance, they must have taken castor oil as they passed the harbor's inner lights. Machines for lifting freight grind all day, and ridiculously small box cars shove and rattle for a share. Yet Southampton seems of a cleaner commodity than Liverpool or London, and I am persuaded that dirtier cargoes sail from the Thames, the Mersey and the Tyne. For the wharves of Liverpool poison the district, and gin-soaked sailors cool their fever in the muddy lanes. The Thames, likewise, below the Tower, fits in fog a Limehouse murder. From these ports filthy business sails, but romance has its port at Plymouth and pleasant holidays run from Southampton to the sea. In most commercial coast towns there is something of a rowdy nature, as if men who are used to larger space rub a rough shoulder to a crowd; yet Southampton is orderly enough.

On the streets near-by the wharves there is a smell of tar, and it turned our noses to the ships. Tar is innocence itself when we take it for a cold or smell an oozing pavement; but when it mingles with twisted hemp and lives beside the sea, a subtle infection issues on its spicy odor. The affairs of spirit defy the humdrum doctors, yet it is a fact that its smell is potent to the brain's distraction. The argument runs deep, nor will its proof appear to those who are inland bred. But tar is the elixir of truancy, the ocean calling to the

land. Boys who run off before the mast feel its first persuasion in their nostrils. These sly infections escape

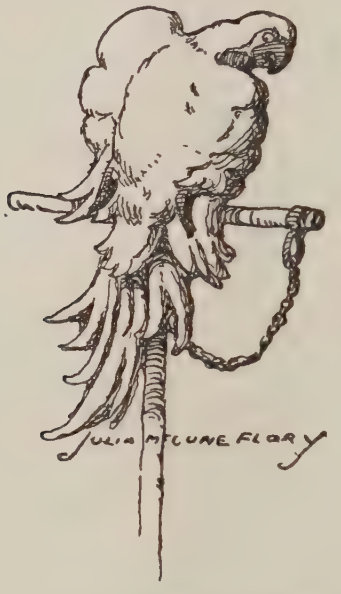
He would have been a deacon in the church

the bitter spoon, but philosophy has its cleansing hint. If Sinbad had wrapped a muffler around his nose, he would have stayed at home and been a deacon in the

church. And a loving wife upon the seaboard claps a clothespin on her husband's face.

George looks like a man who might be infected with tar, so I steered him toward the retail streets.

Back from the confusion of Southampton's water front we found polished brass and whitened sills—



The vivid language of the sea

streets where smoke room stewards live in an occasional acquaintance with their wives; for in these snug squares, built close with tiny buildings, their holidays are harbored. We saw in every window an aspidistra, that is as British as the union jack. As long as there is dust on its leaves, the empire is safe. I like to think that little admirals sail their ships across the carpet, and

that a parrot discourses from each perch the vivid language of the sea.

Presently we turned into a business street that caters to the docks with shops of nautical instruments and books of engineering, together with novels of

There was a frisky waving of the tail

harassed virtue which even a sailor would hide beneath his pillow. We passed an old church and then the Dolphin Hotel, marked by one of those strange fish that stands always on its head. There was a frisky waving of the tail, as if the position were volunteer and

pleasant. A lady of my acquaintance tells me she reduces night and morning in this posture under the instructions of a yogi. God's path lies on the sea, and from his stouter fish our newer healing takes its hint.

In the eighteenth century Southampton had a flare of fashion as a resort and spa, and it is recorded that assemblies were held at the Dolphin on the model of Bath and Tunbridge Wells. No Beau Nash achieved fame, but Swift and Gay and Pope were visitors, with fops and a duchess for ombre and intrigue. Chairs trotted to the ball with white cotton legs, and lace and red heels sat inside. And there were waters for all complaints. In those days, before Macadam had brought Devon and the highlands close to London, or steam had tamed the Channel, Vanity Fair stayed near at home. But even then there were smooth roads to Southampton, as there were to Bath and Tunbridge Wells, and fashion traveled in its coach. Nowadays it seeks the shore of France, the Lido and the softer Spanish coast.

Presently we went through the Bargate—a Norman arch beneath a structure of the thirteenth century, with a niche for George III ridiculously clothed in a Roman toga, as if he were the great Augustan who named his century. It marks a static age that took its pleasure in the classics. Our own days, uplifted by the movie, will laugh at those silly times.

It seems that when tramways were a novelty, it was proposed that tracks be laid in the High Street. But on measuring the Bargate's arch it was found to be too low to permit the passage of the cars. The arch

was old and the cars were new, so it seemed more profitable to destroy the gate. Then a happy compromise was struck, and the roadway was lowered for a taller clearance.

This recalls an episode that once threatened Canterbury's West Gate. It appears that in the middle of the nineteenth century a menagerie, on planning a tour through Kent, sent a man ahead to Canterbury to measure the gate to learn whether the elephants could

Whether the highest elephant could be trained to crawl upon its stomach

get in. And he discovered that the tallest of these creatures would stick in the passage. There was already excitement in the town, for the apprentices had stocked themselves with peanuts. The problem was carried to the city corporation. An inquiry was made whether the highest elephant could be trained to crawl upon its stomach, but the necessary practice would break the season's schedule. For elephants had not the easy ways of acquiring grace and culture that humanity is now offered. If it be crawling, the lan-

guages, or tunes on the ukelele, they must start the training in their youth. So in despair it was proposed that the West Gate be demolished, rather than lose a circus and a holiday. It was only the mayor's veto that saved the gate.

The first mad progress of the nineteenth century nearly wrecked the legacy of the ancient world. Bentham and utility, although they reformed a tattered constitution, despoiled the castles to repair farm buildings and patch pigsties. What is the use of them, they cried. And ancient buildings have no use, except for their inspiration of the heart. We shall run on much of this as we proceed.

Southampton, although it is of prosperous newness, is yet one of the oldest towns of England. In the bronze age its harbor was an ingress for those Celtic hordes which were pushed forever west until they came to Cornwall, to Wales, to Ireland and to the Scottish highlands. Southampton was a port of Roman ships. The West Saxons next assailed its sheltered water, and they built the kingdom of Wessex with its capitol at Winchester but a few miles up the Itchen. And Alfred made it a scholars' mecca for all Europe.

Danish boats scraped in the shallow river when it came their time of pillage. In Sussex, but a short distance to the east, King Canute called to the tide to turn. At Southampton there is a double tide. After its normal flow, it hesitates an hour then again advances. Had Canute known this, he could have performed an easy miracle and the ocean would have remembered forever his instruction. The reason of this

double flow arises from the two channels to the sea on either side of the Isle of Wight, one long one and one short. When the tide has reached the top through the shorter course, the march of water still advances through the other. This extra period of flood is of service to modern commerce.

After the Conquest, when Winchester was still the seat of Norman Kings, Southampton was their frequent port to the shore of France. And it was this advantage that held Winchester to its importance when Wessex was but a name. England then was only an appendage of the Norman duchy, and the Channel was an inland sea thrust like a wedge to divide its north and south.

But when the Norman veneer of England fused with the Saxon underneath, England gained consciousness of independent power; and when the Angevins were swept aside, the Channel became a frontier against a foreign enemy. Winchester and Southampton, no longer busy with the traffic of their Norman dukes, declined. London arose to be the English capital, and the *Cinque Ports* the south land's defense. For it was fishing craft that were mustered in a crisis to be ships of battle, and the towns that had the largest fleets were of prime importance. But London was the market, and Kent and Sussex had the shortest water carriage for their catch; so fishing flourished there. These Five Ports on the narrow seas could strike also a swifter blow at France and run to a nearer harbor in retreat.

From what is now the West Quay the Mayflower sailed. She touched later at Plymouth which now with

better advertising steals the popular renown. The Pilgrims had made their start from Holland in two ships, but the Speedwell was discarded at Southampton as unfit. So the Mayflower took to America a double load. The destination intended was Virginia, but contrary winds forced them on the Cape. Massachusetts

Massachusetts in its moments of stiffer nose

in its moments of stiffer nose can be brought to our common level by a hint that only calamity disbarked them on the holy rock. It was a choice of shipwreck or a Boston suburb.

Ships of Richard's crusade sailed from the Solent. It was from Southampton that the English fleet lifted anchor for Agincourt.

The king is set from London; and the scene
Is now transported, gentles, to Southampton:
There is the playhouse now, there you must sit:
And thence to France shall we convey you safe—

If there be anyone who reads without a tingling of his blood the third scene of that fourth great act where Henry offers passport to cowards who will not fight, let him be dipped in Southampton's greasy water.

And gentlemen in England now a-bed
Shall think themselves accurs'd they were not here,
And hold their manhoods cheap whiles any speaks
That fought with us upon Saint Crispin's day.

Southampton stretches now through monotonous suburbs to the edge of the New Forest on the west, to Netley Abbey on the southeast, and the road to Winchester is dotted with houses whose brick and mortar are scarcely dry. It is the modern British Empire and its need of ships and terminals that have swelled the town. Within the nineteenth century the population had increased from less than eight thousand to more than—

"I think," said George, "that it's time we found our wheels."

"True enough," I answered.

A Buddha who had swallowed a watermelon without chewing

CHAPTER IV

WE SELECT OUR WHEELS

To run upon the sharp wind of the north.

AND now above the Bargate we came to a shop of sports and games. Touring on bicycle has declined with the coming of the motor and of a consequence there were no wheels for hire. So we bought them, with bells, luggage carriers, shift gears and rear reflectors. Collins studied his reflector, which was a glass ruby of polished facets.

"I think," he said, "it must be the invention of a Scotsman."

"And why?" asked George.

"Because," said Collins, "it lets an approaching motor supply the expense of lighting it."

But we did not need them. To a person of proper habits there is no night in an early English summer—or at most a dark hour toward dawn to give the crowing hens a rest. The bird of dawning singeth all night long, so daylight must fasten close upon the evening. The twilight throws a softer color on the fields, begrudging their surrender to the night.

Two hours were needed to adjust our wheels.

"Now what?" I asked.

"Lunch," said Collins.

"Ah," said George, "I have another errand first."

So, at the Bargate we turned into a narrow street; and here we found an antique shop, marked in the window by a Buddha who had swallowed a watermelon without chewing—probably a negro Buddha. These Buddhas hold between their fingers what is perhaps the symbol of the universe, but I choose to think it is a pellet for indigestion.

Inside—the shop, not the Buddha—was the usual litter. But this may apply to the Buddha also, if one considers seeds and rind.

George inquired for engravings of George Washington. The dealer had none but, being a salesman of resource, he darted up the stairs and returned with an armful of John Wesley. I once lived across the street from a Methodist church, but I had never suspected that Wesley had sat for so many portraits. His opposition to the pictures and statues of the Roman faith

seems inconsistent. George bought only a sampler, and on it Adam and Eve gathered apples in the amplest of Victorian fig leaves.

"Perhaps the other gentleman would like a Wesley," urged the dealer.

"I am south-Irish," said Collins.

One would think that the trade in antiques was recent, caused by our cunning machines and a desire for work of hand. But I find in Timbs' Curiosities of London, written in 1855, that these shops had long flourished—that a district of Wardour Street, once filled with book stalls, was then crowded with curiosities. The fad was buhl, porcelain, plate and tapestry of Louis XV. And now our zeal is hot for 1855. To-day's preacher, we are told, is the text of tomorrow's sermon; and the discard of any generation the treasure of a turning century.

The narrow street ended in a park and here we watched a cricket match played bare-legged in one suspender. There was no referee, and decisions went to those who yelled the loudest—a truth discovered by our flour and breakfast foods. Whenever our interest lagged a yellow dog ran off with the ball and worried it in a corner of the lot. No foreigner understands cricket but humorists delight in ridicule. The easy leisure of a game that adjourns for tea marks a people whose strength is moderation. In baseball we merely stretch before the seventh inning, then yell for more excitement.

We lunched at the Savoy Hotel. This occupies a house of faded pretense set back from Above Bar Street;

although the buildings on both sides, when fashion left, stepped forward to the curb to make a sale. One of these was a shop for women.

For modest cherry pickers

"Ladder-proof stockings," said Collins, reading a placard in the window. "Of unusual length, no doubt, for modest cherry pickers."

"I remember," said George, "when they used to be cotton above the calf, and it was nobody's business."

The Savoy was chiefly restaurant downstairs, but there was a parlor in front with a piano, a tidy and an aspidistra, together with a gong upon the landing to fetch the boarders. We ate in a circular room with niches where marble ladies stood ready for puss-in-the-corner. The nineteenth century loved a niche, as the thirteenth loved a lancet window. On the wall Cupid shot an arrow at a pretty creature with a hound in leash.

We ordered tea and a cold joint because we had no choice. The family cat spent its time jumping up on laps all around the room, to be lifted down when its nose came against the meat. The joint was veal—or, perhaps, kittens; for the cat's friendly sniffing raised a doubt.

We sat for cigarettes on the back veranda beneath a ragged wistaria. The garden path was marked by rows of half-buried marmalade jars, popping up for resurrection. They were a variant from the beer bottles that usually dignify the horticulture of England's middle class.

Popping up for resurrection

It was our mite to the entertainment of Southampton

CHAPTER V

THE START AND A LONG DETOUR

The sun shone, the bees swept past me singing; and I too sang, shouted, World, world, I am coming!

WE started with a mishap. George had not perceived that the levers beneath his hands controlled the brakes; so he coasted into me, and there was a general spill against the curb. But it was our mite to the entertainment of Southampton. For a moment it seemed that a beer van would crush us both.

"At least," said George, "it would make a cheerful epitaph for the little lot upon the hill."

It was one o'clock. Our objective for the night was Salisbury, but I chose a longer road through Lyndhurst

in the New Forest; for I had stayed there once for a week-end, and I was eager to show the garden of the Grand Hotel. For the joy of traveling is to point out sights to one's ignorant acquaintance. As far as the mouth of the river Test our route skirted Southampton Water through fresh suburbs. Then we forked south.

"This is the New Forest," I said to Collins, as I pedaled up.

"Where?" he asked, for open meadows stretched around us.

"You don't suppose," I answered, "that the English would change the name just because the trees are gone. Don't I still write brown hair upon my passport? There is no forest now in Arden or in Sherwood—not what you'd call a forest—and Epping is half swallowed up by London suburbs. Half of the islands of England—Thanet, Avalon, Oxney—are silted to the mainland, but they are islands on the map."

"It reminds me," said Collins, "of the Holy Roman Empire, which was neither holy—"

"Exactly," I answered. "And whenever a thing is called new, it is especially old. Newcastle was built long ago against the Scots and it is a battered, worn-out town. The New College at Oxford is so old it rattles. Newgate grew so feeble that it fell over and was carted off."

"Quite so," said Collins, and he coasted past me down a little hill, leaving me to reflect on the permanence of names.

When Shakespeare wrote "Not marble, nor the gilded monuments of princes, shall outlive this powerful

rime," it may have been conviction of his worth, or vanity, or the mere convention of the Elizabethan sonnet. Nor is it permitted any man, except when the moon is blue, to write a book that lasts. But if one shall name a forest, a mountain, a lake or river—even a flower or blade of grass—it is likely that the name will persist to later centuries and perhaps forever. Sometimes the name will be so knocked about in ignorant speech that letters and whole syllables will be lost—for the hurried tongue takes an easy path among the consonants—but at worst something will be left to show its origin. *Route du Roi* becomes Rotten Row. Convent is elided into Covent. Brighthelmston is pinched to Brighton. A village may grow to be a town, then a city, to crumble into dust at the turn of fortune's wheel, but the name will outlive its last inhabitant to set forever its mark upon a wilderness.

I hurried on, and hinted something of this to Collins.

"Of course," he answered disconcertingly, for I had thought I had struck on something neat. "There's Carthage and the demolished cities of Egypt."

Then he speeded up and left me. George was far ahead, his shoulders wagging from side to side in an effort to keep close behind a beer van. The sniff was doubtless pleasant, but the method seems Scotch. So again I was left alone to think about a book I had lately read that discusses matters of this sort. The bicycle's straight road is the mind's detour.

As concerns these British Isles, a few syllables that an ignorant man can memorize—Celt, Roman, Saxon, Dane, and Norman syllables—will set each invasion

in its place upon the countryside, mark the limit and the condition of its attack, and its change to peaceful life. These syllables are the clue of coastal pillage, and its advance until it takes the plow.

If books were lost we would know, by the names upon a map, something of the Celts as they first appeared in British history when England lay in a barren fog across the Channel. We would find them in lonely tribal living with trails at most to connect them with their neighbors. Each valley was ignorant beyond its hill. Each settlement knew only the lake or river that flowed along its habitation. Names mark their mode of life as clearly as stone utensils, or the shape of burial mounds or bones discovered in the clay.

For wherever men knew one river only they required no special name for it, and called it only *river*. It is when they travel and more than one river mingles in their life, that they must differentiate them by proper names. Most of the larger waterways of England carry Celtic names; and the greater part of these (however diversely they are spelled and sounded) come from identical or parallel sources, as dialects may differ, and mean one thing only—river. Rye, Rea, Rey, Ray, Eryn, Roden, Ribble, Don, Dean, Dane, Dun, Durra, Durbeck, Dour, Dore, Lodore, Thur, Adder, Adur, Noder, Cheddar, Wey, Wye, Usk, Ex, Esk, Axe, Ock, Oke, Ouse, Isbourne, Easeburn, Ashbourne—every one of them means merely river. A few of these, it is true, carried a descriptive adjective. The Thames is the broad Isis, and there is the Tame and Tamar. The Cam is a crooked stream. The Medway, the Solway

and the Conway are imbedded with adjectives. But it is this general recurrence (applying also to the continent) that shows how meager was communication and travel, in what isolation tribes persisted. We speak of the Rhine, the Seine, the Don, the Danube and the Thames, without adding a river at the end; and this is correct, for otherwise we would be redundant. But when we say the Thames, the broad river, we get with the adjective a hint that the tribes here must have known another river besides their own, that life included travel.

Some of the names of British rivers tell of successive peoples that came to dwell upon them, each without knowledge of its predecessor's language. Such a name is Wansbeck Water. *Wan* and *S* (cut from *uisge*) are Celtic of successive layers. *Beck* is Saxon. Each of these roots means river. These last three roots of Wansbeck Water prove, therefore, by their redundance, the ignorance of each for the people replaced. It is a clue to annihilation. That two of the syllables are Celtic indicates the long periods between their immigration. It is said that our name of whiskey may be derived from *uisge*,—which meant yellow water.

Wild flowers survive the catastrophes of nations, the destruction of farms and cities and the upheaval of nature. A buttercup will outlast Rome. And placenames share this longevity. The map of England is scratched with Latin, sometimes half concealed in modern forms. We may know where Roman camps were dug upon the hills, their towns and baths and roads—and sometimes, as with the Stane Street,

whether they were paved. By the closeness of their radiating spokes, we may estimate the importance of cities that have now, like Sarum, disappeared; and in the straightness of these roads and their manner of pointing inward from the coast, as from the Channel for example, we may study the movement of their legions in the conquest of the islands. We may know—as with Stratford and Church Stretton—the towns that stood upon them. By the scarcity of *pons* we may discover how few bridges the Romans built on major streams. For Latin marks a bridge, or perhaps a bridge destroyed, as we find in Pontefract.

The name of Marazion, a town on the Cornish coast, may be Phœnician, and left by them in their quest for tin. Phœnician names dot the Mediterranean, but this lonely island was too distant and except for Cornwall, England is not marked by their commerce.

But when the Saxons came and settled into peace, many clews will show the manner of their living. With these as evidence, it seems that the greatest gift they brought was the love of home, some place that could be hedged about and made secure. For wherever the map shows Saxon names, you will find *ham* a frequent termination. In all the map of Europe, except in Saxon lands, there is no reiterated syllable of quite this connotation. Nor have the French any such word today. And this home was defended with wattles cut from trees; for town has changed from *ton*, and *ton* from *tine*, and a tine (as of a fork) is the pointed stick of a wattle hedge. "There's a divinity that doth hedge a king." And Shakespeare used a word that the Saxons in-

vented as a guard about their cattle. A *fold* was a protection of felled trees. A garden was a guarded place. And *worth*, *stoke*, *stock*, *garth*, *park*, *burgh*, and many other Saxon syllables that end village names, all show a love of privacy, a sense of property, the bond of family; and they hint of crops and cattle, of dangerous living that craves protection. It was from a Saxon start that the Englishman's home became his castle.

We know from names the harbors where the Danish Vikings first were sighted, the rivers up which their pillage ran, and the districts they made their own. A *wick* (Greenwich) was a roadstead where they grounded in smooth water either in a river or a harbor, and it is from this syllable that they take their name; for the Vikings were the river men.

The *ford* of the Saxons, a land people, was a shallow river crossing; and the *fiord* of the Danes, sea roamers, was a passage for their ships—the same word twisted to opposite racial habits. *Ing* is usually Saxon, marking a family name, and throughout England it recurs in villages as in Huntington. But the Danes left their families at home, and they named their towns from their chiefs. The Danes finally settled into peace, but essentially their invasion was pillage. The Saxons fought, but then they fetched their families, and the thick scattering of *ings* is evidence.

There are syllables that tell of a shifting line of coast, of cities now inland which were once on the sea—Sandwich, once a Danish town on a sandy roadstead—Holbeach, now six miles from the coast—Tydd, which

tides no longer reach. A *hithe* is a haven, but Hythe is inland. Lewes means landing place, but it is a long day's walk from salt water. Syllables tell of former islands which are now mainland (*ey* and *ea*)—Romney, Pevensey, Selsey, Ely. And many of the London suburbs on the Thames were islets on the borders of a marshy river—Putney, Chelsea, Bermondsey, and Thorney where Westminster Abbey was built. Syllables indicate, in *field* and *fen*, where woods were felled and marshes drained.

Greenwich, of which the *wich* is a variant of *wick*, was a roadstead in the Thames of Danish attack. *Ness* and *Nez* mean nose; and headlands all along the lower Thames mark their navigation—Sheerness, Foulness, Foreness. *By* means town. And these syllables, reiterated on England's eastern coast, indicate the attack and habitation of Vikings.

Hursts and *charts* were thicker portions of a forest. *Dens* were wooded valleys. *Hot* meant woodland, but Bagshot and Aldershot have lost their trees. *Leys* were open lands where cattle lay; and a lea now stands as a noun alone. The *der* of Derby meant in its German origin wild beast, which may recall this Saxon town's fierce resistance to the Danes. And when wild beasts were exterminated, the *der* came to mean a deer, their solitary remnant.

So, if maps speak with outward contradiction, as in the New Forest, they explain how men once lived. These names, passed so carelessly in familiar speech, are the vivid record of an older life.

The beer van had pulled ahead.

"That was rather jolly about the whiskey," said George. "Do you happen to know what beer comes from?"

"I'm sorry," I answered.

"*Je vous touche*," he said. "The spigot."

At Lyndhurst we rested in the garden of the Grand Hotel. This was built by an emigrant from the French Revolution to be his residence, and only in these last decades has it come to the use of travelers. There is hunting here, with stables in the village. In the season dinner jackets show themselves at night.

The New Forest served the Norman court at Winchester, as Richmond Park served later kings at Westminster. Richmond is now tamed to family picnics, but the New Forest still preserves its freedom. Eight hundred years and more have passed since William Rufus was shot, but an old horse jogs out each day from Lyndhurst with green trippers to see the stone that marks his murder.

Great trees surround the closely cropped grass of the Grand Hotel, which looked, as Collins remarked, as if it were tacked down. "At spring cleaning," he added, "a man comes around with a claw hammer."

To Collins the world is all a stage. On any street of quainter roofs he sets a play. Here at Lyndhurst he marked out exits for The Tempest among the trees.

"How far is it to Salisbury?" asked George.

"About twenty miles," I answered.

George sighed. "I didn't suppose that Scotland was so far."

It was three o'clock when we hoisted out.

Our wooded road lay north to Cadnam which sits on the border of the New Forest. The inn here is the Sir John Barleycorn. But it was a closed hour, and our tapping brought no response. So George put his face to a window and informed the landlady inside that he was acquainted with several American cousins

"How far is it to Salisbury?" asked George

of the Barleycorns who had lately come down from Canada.

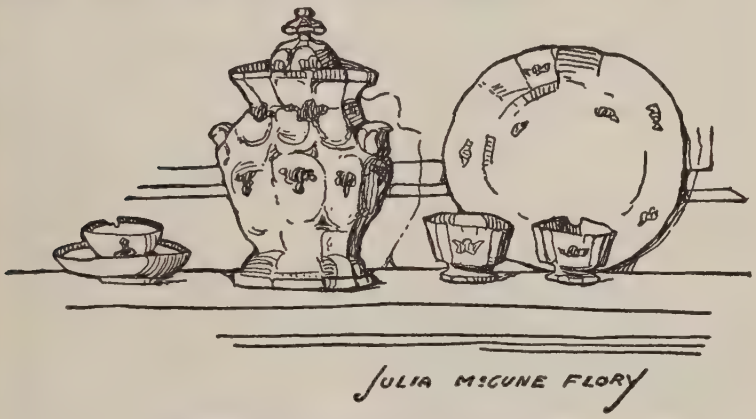
She shook her head.

"Whiskey," George continued through the window, "takes it name from *uisge*, meaning yellow water; and perhaps that stirs your interest."

But still she shook her head.

George talks about liquor but he seldom drinks. Nor Collins. And my own taste takes its liquor mild, or

not at all. It marks our American hysteria that we talk so much of what we really care so little. Prohibition is a failure when it forces to the front a subject of minor interest. I hope it saves our bodies, for the mind rots in its discussion. Except for gin, golf and bridge, we would sit in empty silence.



Broken tea-cups, wisely kept for show,
Rang'd o'er the chimney, glisten'd in a row

We crossed the street to a cottage on which a signboard announced that teas might be procured. The English put the word in the plural because they drink five cups.

After tea and speckled cake, we saw the house. There was a parlor first, where cracked china was ornament.

> Broken tea-cups, wisely kept for show,
> Rang'd o'er the chimney, glisten'd in a row.

And we saw a tiny kitchen of blackened ceiling and oven made against the wall. In the garden, beer bottles

marked the paths among innocent vegetables that did not know their sinful company.

And now there were many miles of waving windy country, with occasional whimpering from George whose thought had shifted to liniment and coffins; until at last on Pepperbox Hill we lay at rest in a meadow by the road in distant view of Salisbury's spire.

But that hope fell

George refused to look. His only wish was to lie on his back. He said he preferred the spire of York; and perhaps his choice might have been open to argument if only York had a spire. But I let the poor dog lie without cramming him with that knowledge which is the pest of travel. Collins slept, also, and their breathing mingled in the Wiltshire wind. For a happy moment I thought a cow had it in her mind to hook them, but that hope fell.

Presently George sat up and lifted out a burr from underneath. "I was so happy," he murmured, "until

that worked through. Except for my balloons, I would have gone flat."

Ranges higher than Pepperbox can be reached by motor, but among tamer prospects none yields a greener world of hill and valley. At the north, on the opposite slope, but buried in the trees, stands Winterslow where Hazlitt lived. In the folding of the northwest Stonehenge and Sarum lie concealed. Here and there a church tower marks an undiscovered village, and Salisbury's spire quests above the hills, confessing no city at its base.

Down the hill we coasted to the town and to the Red Lion Hotel, which is built as an inn should be around the coach yard, with coffeeroom windows looking out.

Terminal and lodging were partners in the age of horses. And the English hotel that is built above a railway station does but follow the tradition of the coach and highroad.

"How far is it?" asked George, as he tumbled off.

"Twenty-six miles this afternoon," I replied. "I wish the old milk horse at home could see you now."

He boiled his legs at once in a hot bath.

In the evening we saw the cathedral from the close, with emotions found in any guide book. Then we boosted George up the stairs to bed.

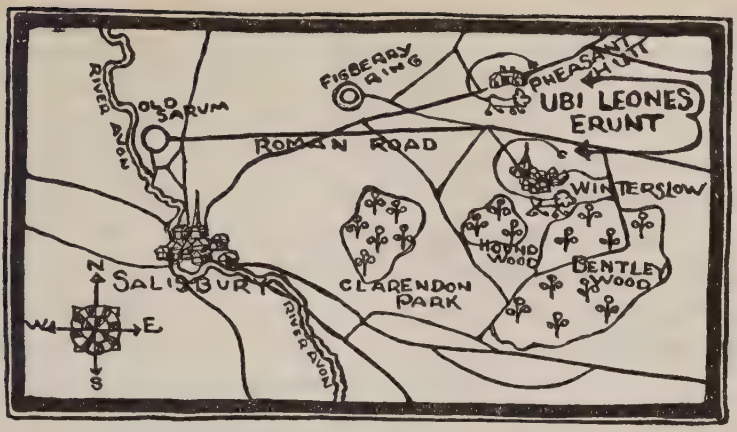
It was an old-fashioned room, whose chairs were thickly stuffed for lean joint-fed countesses, whose dresser wore a cretonne apron to shield its Victorian legs—an apartment wholesome enough to any actual record of the nose, but to the sniff of spirit breathing odors of Elizabeth and antiquity.

We laid George away in a four-post bed whose curtains were reefed against the headboard. Presently it would cross the night under bare poles like a phantom ship.

"I'll bet," said George, "that the old queen slept here once. I seem to smell civet and musk—and just a touch of moth balls."

He climbed to the top of a rolling mattress that resembled the Devon moors. He cuddled in a valley.

"And now," said George, "you might douse the glim."



Ubi leones erunt

CHAPTER VI

A PILGRIMAGE TO WINTERSLOW

Ubi Leones Erunt.

WINTERSLOW stands on a pleasant ridge not many miles from Salisbury, and on previous visits to the district the map had invited me to see this village where William Hazlitt lived. The London highway escapes Winterslow upon the north. It trots on easier level to save its breath from sharper hills, and a quiet crossroad mounts to the village through the waving grain of Wiltshire wind.

But now I thought it worth a pilgrimage to see the house of a man who had written so savagely against Gifford of the Quarterly, so prettily of sundials, and on going a journey with phrases that drew adulation from R. L. S. "Though we are mighty fine fellows nowadays," said Stevenson, "we cannot write like

Hazlitt." And he proposed a tax on those who had not read the essay. This proposal used to be in the paper entitled Walking Tours, but just now when I consulted the volume I find it has slipped out of the text. It has probably gone to board in some other essay for a vacation and a change of air, just as men upon a plain pass in August a fortnight by the sea. Or my recollection may be at fault. But I have run

It has probably gone to board in some other essay

through a dozen pages of Stevenson and this is sufficient payment for the search. If beauty were as infectious as a cough, my own paragraphs would run more smoothly.

To Winterslow Hazlitt came after his marriage with Sarah Stoddart in 1808, to live with her in her house near the end of the village street. She had an annuity of £80 with further expectations; but Hazlitt had no settlement except what he might claim from the parish,

as Charles Lamb remarked while the engagement was going forward. "*Pauper est Cinna*," he added, "*sed amat.*" It was an odd match, for Miss Stoddart seems to have been on the willing verge of marriage with at least two men in the few preceding months. She caught Hazlitt on a double rebound, and he borrowed £100 to provide the decencies of a wedding trip. We must not scan genius too closely, for ugly facts crop out. "We shall set off merrily," he wrote, "in spite of all the prudence of Edinburgh."

At Winterslow during his honeymoon, Hazlitt wrote a history of philosophy, a life of his friend, Holcroft, who had lately died, and an English grammar—strange pursuits for fairyland—and in the grammar he vented a rage against Lindley Murray that was worthy of a rejected bachelor.

Until 1812 Winterslow was their intermittent home, for Hazlitt was dependent on London work. So we find him in city journalism, first as a parliamentary reporter, then as a critic of the theater, next as a column writer on politics and current matters, until at last he emerges as an awkward lecturer on the history of art and letters. Much of this work was done in Winterslow, and when it was performed he would launch himself on London with wares for the publisher and platform.

It is strange how long Hazlitt took to find himself. It appears from his biography that he was mature at fifteen—an unnatural priggish maturity, it is true, for he was projecting A New Theory of Civil and Criminal Legislation, reading Hume, Berkeley and Hobbes. But

for twenty-five years thereafter he plodded through a vast journalistic output before he stumbled on the familiar essay which is his claim to lasting recognition. It is ironical that a man who could do his bit with some success, raveling the complexities of European affairs and thought, flinging out his opinion on God and Empire, should find his immortality at last in the wayward thinking of a country road, in the disquisition on a sundial, in an unvalued truancy of thought.

So these years of married life at Winterslow and London are the period of journalism, of contest against the Quarterly which was Tory and hated him, against the libelous jests of Blackwood's, of lectures composed to keep away the wolf, of friendship with Charles Lamb, of friendship and quarrel with Leigh Hunt, of antagonism against Coleridge, Southey and Wordsworth who had now forgotten their enthusiasm for Napoleon and the Revolution which once they had shared with him—an enthusiasm cooled by the excesses of the Terror and the danger that anarchy might spread to England.

Never as in the two decades that ended with the Reform Bill of the early thirties, has literature been so pressed into political assault, or worn so blatantly the tag of party. No man then was a poet only, or novelist or essayist; he was foremost a Whig or Tory, slipped from leash to bite his party's enemy. It is at our politicians today that we hurl abuse or praise; but in London of those years neither Liverpool nor Canning could have been the targets of sharper invective than were Leigh Hunt, Hazlitt, Gifford, Southey and many another writer now forgotten. Our little jealousies around

the literary table sink below the Cyclopean uproar of the British quarterlies and dailies in the years before and after Waterloo. Vinegar, salt, mustard, pepper! One stepped lively, or was tripped.

Once before, in the reign of Queen Anne, Grub Street had composed electioneering pamphlets and had been given easy office in red tape. But those wits of the coffeehouses took the employment lightly as a pension with abundant leisure, and like lazy mercenaries they fought with moderate zeal. A pen too sharp could scarcely find a patron if the opposition came to power. And the lingering war with France stood far off from daily life, and there was no revolution in the air as the word came later to be understood. Nor were there tremendous changes in industrial and social life to threaten an older fabric.

But London in the years of Waterloo stood fiercely with its back against a tottering wall, and both sides saw ruin in opposite opinion. Politics took its manners from Billingsgate, and a writer was valued by the sharpness of his curse. And when political opinions had been assailed, there was ink still in the pot to smear a poem, or an essay, or private character.

We were "heavily oppressed," comments the Quarterly on Hazlitt's Round Table, for he was said to be a Jacobin, "with a recollection of vulgar descriptions, silly paradoxes, flat truisms, misty sophistry, broken English, ill-humor, and rancorous abuse. . . . We are far from intending to write a single word in answer to this loathsome trash. . . . We should not have meddled with him; but if the creature, in his endeavors

to crawl into the light, must take his way over the tombs of illustrious men, disfiguring the records of their greatness with the slime and filth which marks his track, it is right to point him out that he may be flung back to the situation in which nature designed he should grovel."

Nor should it be forgotten that the Quarterly was in reputation rather a dull respectable magazine. It was the mouthpiece of the Tory government, upholding traditions that were to pass into discard in the whirlwind of industrial and social change of the twenty years that followed. Gifford was the editor, and to him Hazlitt addressed an open letter that is as brilliantly scurrilous as can be found in letters. No thesaurus contains so many names for rascal—forty-six book pages of abuse. In such quarrels we must not sympathize with Hazlitt as the under dog, for his bite was madness. Gifford, he wrote, "may call out with the fellow in The Tempest, I am not Stephano, but a cramp."

Of hatred Hazlitt had much to say. "Without something to hate," he wrote, "we should lose the very spring of thought and action. . . . Love turns, with a little indulgence, to indifference or disgust: hatred alone is immortal. . . . Old friendships are like meats served up repeatedly, cold, comfortless and distasteful. . . . The most amusing or instructive companion is at best like a favorite volume, that we wish after a time *to lay upon the shelf*." And if he serves the men of his close acquaintance so, his vitriol toward Gifford is explained.

Is it any wonder that Hazlitt escaped as often as he could from the pot throwing of London to walk in the meadows and woods of Winterslow? And perhaps already, in the early years of his marriage, some hint was stirred by the song of birds and the swift movement of the clouds—a hint that English roads and taverns, the play of light and shadow, hunger and fatigue and thirst, old books and older recollection, would be the inspiration of his future pen, and that this softer meditation would make him famous when Bourbons and Jacobins had been forgotten.

"He who lives wisely to himself and to his own heart," he wrote, "looks at the busy world through the loopholes of retreat, and does not want to mingle in the fray. . . . He reads the clouds, he looks at the stars, he watches the return of the seasons, the falling leaves of autumn, the perfumed breath of spring, starts with delight at the note of a thrush in a copse near him, sits by the fire, listens to the moaning of the wind, pores upon a book, or discourses the freezing hours away. . . ."

So Hazlitt lived intermittently at Winterslow—weary with conflict when his stagecoach lumbered west, but a man of assault and fire, when it journeyed back to strife. In winter it was now and then a week of country, but of longer stay in summer.

And when the years had soured his marriage and Scotland had divorced him, he came again to reside near-by in the Pheasant Hut, a coach house on the London road. Many of his enduring essays, much of his Life of Napoleon now unread and omitted from

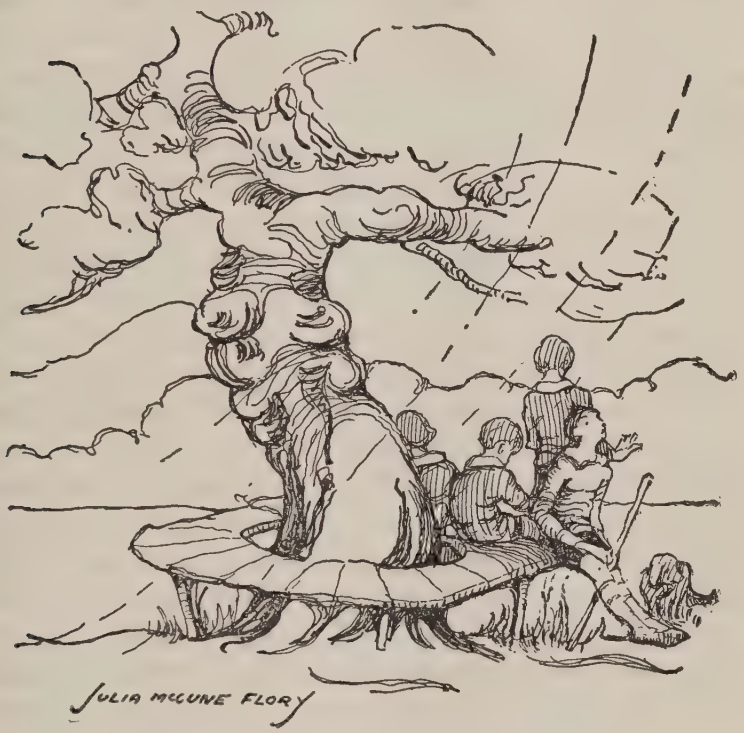
his collected work, were composed in this countryside of Wiltshire and, except for London or Wem in Shropshire where he passed his youth, this village should be the Mecca for the admirers of his bitter and entertaining pen.

I determined to visit first the Pheasant Hut, for much of his Table Talk—the volume of his most enduring charm—was written here. It has been said that Hazlitt was a pest to his landladies—and he lived mostly in public lodgings—because of an ugly habit of practicing his unripe phrases on the wall paper. I would look, therefore, for remnants neglected in the spring cleanings of more than a hundred years. With luck I might alter the text of some cherished page.

George's thirty-minute hard-boiled legs were still stiff, so Collins and I left him to rummage in the antique shops and we pedaled off without him. The morning sun shone brightly as we started but clouds were already racing from the west, each with a drenching downpour.

We were in the outskirts of Salisbury when the first of these hit us. We found, however, a convenient shelter beneath a great tree around whose base was built a circular bench "for talking age and whispering lovers made"—but here were boys caught on the way to school. I observed their willingness that the rain continue, for here they might whistle careless tunes and be indifferent into how many parts *Gallia est omnis divisa.* Yet every happy respite has its end, and in a delusive flash of sunlight they ambled off to join Cæsar's army on the Rhine.

The course waves up and down to the Pheasant Hut, with the shoulder of higher hills upon the south—a country of generous prospect riding high upon the island. All of Wiltshire is a speedway for the wind.



Here were boys caught on the way to school

One might have thought this morning that Hazlitt's Going on a Journey had fallen to its eye and that it acted on the hint. But by good luck it pelted from the west and pushed us up the hills. There is nothing of brisker exultation than riding with unreefed ears, wing

and wing before the wind. Under such propulsion the upward slopes are flat, and gravity has lost its sober face.

Figsbury Ring presently lay close to the highway on the north. The Roman road crossed here, and from this the Ring was thought to be of Roman origin until scholars thrust it further back to Celtic days. Its earthwork, encompassing fifteen acres, is followed both within and without by ditches. An inside ditch seems without value in defense but it appears to mark Celtic work, and we shall find it again at Avebury. Our zeal for exploration was drowned in rain, but we found a tree that had not begun to leak. These showers travel in such heavy traffic that they run in sections, each advancing when its predecessor clears the block.

This is the London road. It is paved and wide, with a graded curve for motors. And even in Hazlitt's time it must have been surfaced; for we read that the Pheasant Hut was a coaching house, and coaches could not advance in heavy mud. Until Macadam devised hard pavements, the eighteenth century had journeyed mostly on horseback. And even with the turn of the century, the golden age of the post coach with its change of horses had hardly started. Its brief perfection in the nineteenth century's third and fourth decades was swept away almost at once by the advance of steam. If Pickwick had delayed but a few years, he must have taken a train to Eatanswill and Manor Farm.

By this road Hazlitt walked to Stonehenge. "Give me the clear blue sky over my head . . . a winding road before me, and a three hours' march to dinner."

And here was a winding road and a three hours' march, even if sunlight did not always answer to the summons. Of stagecoaches there is a legend that Hazlitt was at his best in their random company. And is it not recorded that in one of them he met his later wife?

Hazlitt was a great fellow for roads and inns. One cannot think of him except when he was afoot or resting in a tavern for the night—reading a new book fresh from London, or plucking an old one from his scanty luggage. He walked one hundred and sixty miles to visit Coleridge at Nether Stowey, and then tramped with him down the Devon coast to Lynton, and back again, and then all the homeward way to Wem in Shropshire. And if these exploits were those of early youth, it was to his youth that Hazlitt turned in full maturity as to a mine of memory. It was at the inn at Llangollen that he "sat down to a volume of the New Eloise." At Bridgewater tavern he read Camilla. At Lynton he found a "well-worn copy of The Seasons, lying in a window-seat." At Shrewsbury it was Paradise Lost and Burke's Reflections. All through Hazlitt's writings we find his favorite books coupled with the names of inns; and often he stated precisely the meat he had for dinner, rolling the happy occasion with meticulous detail on his tongue. At Llangollen it was "a bottle of sherry and a cold chicken." "There is one subject," he wrote, "on which it is pleasant to talk on a journey; and that is, what one shall have for supper when we get to our inn at night . . . eggs and a rasher, a rabbit smothered in onions, or an excellent veal cutlet!"

And he died in lodgings, in Frith Street Soho, which is now London's district of foreign restaurants. If one dines at the Isola Bella on spaghetti with tomato sauce, he is but a few doors from the room where Charles Lamb stood beside his bed. "I've had a happy life," were Hazlitt's dying words. But one likes best to think of him in earlier vigor and outside the quarrels of London—strolling on these Wiltshire hills, resting on the peak of bridges, studying the shadow of the clouds to weave them to his thought.

Half of the British essayists tramped the streets and roads, and the other half sat in the front window of a tavern to watch the former half go by. Addison and Steele and Swift were of the second sort, and a coffee-house was their best vantage of the world. All the Queen Anne wits loved a taproom and an easy chair. But Lamb and Johnson walked the Strand and found their stimulus in foggy torches and the elbows of the crowd. And others took to country roads. What legs these writers had! Thackeray's were six feet long at least, so that his progress was like a man on stilts. Leslie Stephen thumped all day without fatigue. Borrow boasted of thirty miles between supper and his bed. Richard Jefferies must have clambered forever up hill and down. Hilaire Belloc walked the length of the Pilgrims' Way and from Calais to Rome. Stevenson, to be sure, traveled with a donkey; but the beast bore his luggage only, and he strode behind to prod her with a stick. In Celestine's lazier hours, his feet must have pushed a double load. If the inn and road were gone, half of the English essay would be swept away.

We found the Pheasant Hut locked tight. I strolled to the rear through a disordered stableyard. A dog rattled his larynx and a chain, yet he seemed the only life. Then we peeked in at a window and discovered the landlord's wife. I put a question through the glass about Hazlitt, and at this a far-off look came

A prickly horse-hair sofa drives custom to an easier sitting in the tap

across her eyes as I dimly stirred a recollection. But her husband was the scholar of the house, and would we sit in the parlor until he came?

It was a stiff room with shabby discard of better houses. It must be that these inn parlors are uncomfortable by design; for when a prickly horse-hair sofa drives custom to an easier sitting in the tap, there is profit for the management. I recall a piano which

needed no trial to prove its discord, an easel with a raw portrait done in chalk. Cheap lithographs of hunting scenes advertised a brand of whisky. Hazlitt was himself a painter and a critic, with a special love for Raphael and Titian; and, if this furnishing existed in his day, it is small wonder that he roamed the hills.

The landlord, although not profound, could by scratching his head recall the essayist; and he took us upstairs to show us where he lived. It was a mean little room on the second level, overlooking the London road through a group of windows that cheaply aped the Tudor. There was space only for a narrow bed, a washstand, a dresser and a chair or two. A fireplace was stuffed with paper frill, but it could scarcely have warmed the tiny room in winter. A print of Lodore hung on the chimney. And Southey was one of Gifford's crew, and Hazlitt hated him. There was also, above the bed, a picture of a prince in a satin coat. And Hazlitt detested the Bourbons and all their kind.

The walls were covered with dingy red wall paper. I looked for mended paragraphs, but a hundred years had smudged them out.

So this was the inn that lay nearest to his heart, his refuge from matrimony and London. A Farewell to Essay Writing was written in this room. "Food, warmth, sleep and a book," he wrote, "these are all I at present ask. . . . I turn back from the world that has deceived me, to nature that lent it a false beauty, and that keeps up the illusion of the past. As I quaff my libations of tea in the morning, I love to watch the clouds sailing from the west, and fancy that 'the spring

comes slowly up this way.'" And we may read that Hazlitt after dinner drew his chair to the fire and turned to the "simple pathos and picturesque truth of Boccaccio's story."

This iron basket in paper frill held the fire that warmed him. Here he sat with scarcely room to stretch his legs to write of Wiltshire hills, of winding roads, of Rousseau and Montaigne, of Claude Lorrain and Rubens, of old books and poets he once had met. And mingled with these was his scorn of Tories and the Bourbon world, of renegades like Wordsworth, of London that he loved and hated—the city that called him forever back to strife.

Of what was Hazlitt thinking when he said his life had been happy? For it was filled with bitterness and disappointment, with women who had turned against him, causes deserted by his friends, tarnished fame and poverty. Perhaps his thoughts ran to his first meeting with Coleridge when as a lad he had tramped the countryside of a Sunday morning to hear him preach. Or did his meditation follow the Devon road where Coleridge "went sounding on his way?" Or memory may have run to Paris where he first discovered Italian painting and became its worshiper forever. It drifted to the Temple where Charles Lamb brewed hot drink, or to the hours of frenzy when he lashed at Gifford. Or did his dying glance turn from Soho to Drury Lane when the great curtain rose—to the nights before a taproom fire when he read Rousseau?

On Living to One's-self was composed at Winterslow. "I never was in a better place or humour," it

starts, "than I am at present for writing on this subject. I have a partridge getting ready for my supper, my fire is blazing on the hearth, the air is mild for the season of the year, I have had but a slight fit of indigestion today (the only thing that makes me abhor myself), I have three hours good before me. . . ." How little does it matter where one lives and works! There is needed but a board to hold the elbows and a pot of ink. Slim talent seeks occasion, but fancy rides upon the wind.

Few authors have written alternately with such beauty and with such disregard. What a fellow he was to use a quotation incorrectly, or to distort it with intention to serve his argument! If you check through an essay a great minority of citations are wrong. But his bag could hold so few books—there were so few in Winterslow by which he could verify a reference. Few writers have been in turn so dull and entertaining. Few of them have wasted so much time in forgotten masterpieces to neglect their easier genius. Few have been so bold to reveal themselves when the revelation was discredit. Our poets now who acclaim their sins, must hang their heads before the self-betrayal of the Liber Amoris.

Hazlitt delighted in his perversities. He boasted that he would be a tough man on a jury, for he would starve the others to his decision. He was obstinate, and an opinion once formed he held forever even when time proved it false. Though quarrelsome with living acquaintance, he was true to a dead painter or poet; and he fitted the same quotations to the books of his

maturity that he employed in youth. These everlasting loves were Montaigne, Rousseau, Rubens, Titian and Napoleon; for he could shift along without Coleridge, and on occasion he grew cold to Lamb. All of us as we grow old, live a bit in the past. And Hazlitt, with quarrels laid aside, was the prophet of this mood, glorifying a sunset that lingered in the sky.

He would be a tough man on a jury

Our landlord showed but a faded interest in Hazlitt; for his thoughts ran to bigger game. It seems that in the year 1826 a traveling circus went through Winterslow and a lion broke loose. Being as all lions are he attacked the stagecoach, took a bite at a horse and was glancing at the passengers as at an apple tart, when the inn dog sprang at him. The dog was killed,

but the delay was sufficient. The lion was forced back inside his cage, and the circus went on as per schedule. The event is recorded in a print which hangs in the hallway of the Pheasant Hut. There is an anecdote of this same kind at Malmesbury, we have just read of elephants touring Kent, and there are of course Shakespeare's lugged bears. There seem to have been circuses before Barnum.

"It isn't often," I remarked to the landlord, "that one inn can shelter two lions."

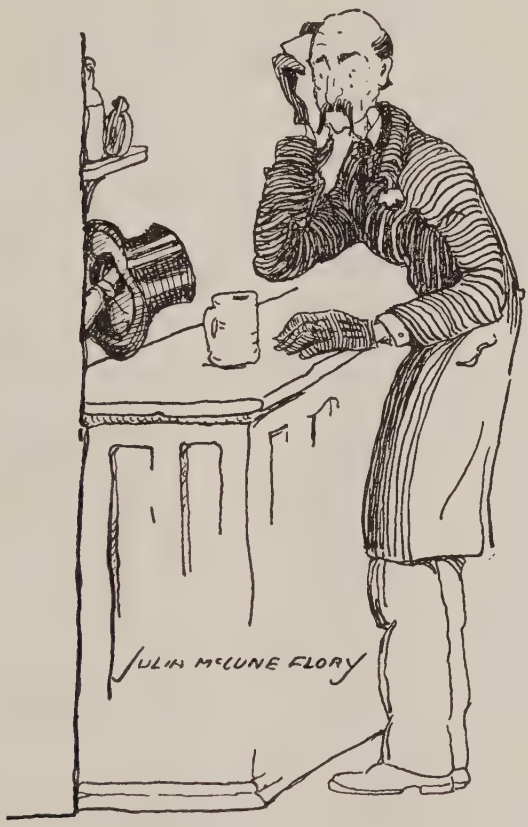
"There was only one," he answered. "For you see, sir, it was only a small circus."

Winterslow itself lies off the London road several miles across the hills. We were about to start in its direction, when a smart hearse stopped at the door of the Pheasant Hut, and the genteelest of undertakers descended from the box. He was dressed in a long coat, with tall hat and black gloves. He looked like a man who would dream of satin pillows and silver side-handles.

For a moment we thought we had intruded on a scene of domestic loss. But a sharper glance at the drooping flower within his buttonhole proclaimed that the day's last sad rites had been performed elsewhere. His was but a minute of unprofessional pleasure, and it was the bar he sought. He hung his ebon hat on a brass beerpull, and called for a pint of bitter. It was our treat, and together we laid the dust of mortality in beer. Hazlitt's was the golden age of puns.

Twice the undertaker pulled upon his cup, while his Adam's apple wiggled up and down like a floating

gauge upon a tank when gasoline runs in. Yet nature seems at fault when it puts the human gauge beneath the chin, so that a drinker cannot behold his intake



He hung his ebon hat on a brass beerpull

and capacity. Did the contrivance run up and down his nose, it would be a sober world. The undertaker thrust forth his tongue and sponged up the liquid that glistened on his sleek mustache. Then he thanked us,

took his hat from the beerpull, climbed to his hearse, clucked at his horse and drove away.

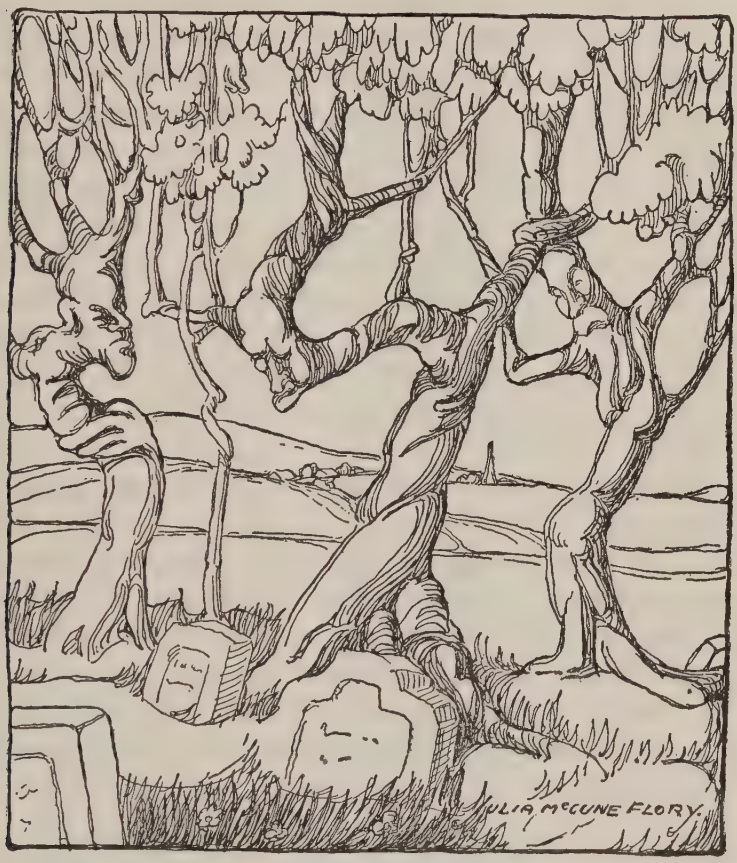
A lane struck out toward Winterslow, crossing the vestige of Sarum's Roman road which once led neolithic man from the Channel to the Plains of Salisbury. For a thousand years at least its dust has been untroubled by a foot, except as a plow has been driven over it. A furrow was a Roman curse, as when Carthage was destroyed, but these fields are ridged with grain that waves its blessing. A farm house stands squarely where Roman legions pounded to the west, but the Romans were but upstarts on a road whose origin is lost.

Meadows smiled in the bottom lands. Tree tops on the flanking hills were swept by breeze, and sheep galloped in the sky.

Here Hazlitt wandered. "I have no need," he wrote, "of book or companion—the days, the hours, the thoughts of my youth are at my side, and blend with the air that fans my cheek. Here I can saunter for hours, bending my eye forward, stopping and turning to look back, thinking to strike off into some less trodden path, yet hesitating to quit the one I am in, afraid to snap the brittle threads of memory."

There is a steep incline to Winterslow, and at the top a church and graveyard of wide outlook. I have remarked elsewhere how snugly these English graveyards stand on the border of a village, how slight the transition from dozing age to unbroken sleep when suffering has been shifted to an easier rest beyond the wall. Here the sightless eyes of spirit gaze forever on the fields where once their plows have marked a

furrow. I like to think that the trees are the sturdier forms of those who sleep; and when the wind shall stir their branches, it is the song of their long contentment



The song of their long contentment through eternity

through eternity. Here life's friendships may persist, and ghosts come forth arm in arm and are neighbors still. The gossip of the leaves is but the sequel of talk

begun around the hearth—broken for a little while until Time has fetched them into company again.

We passed into the village and saw a woman beyond a hedge who tended flowers. We inquired from her of Hazlitt. She seemed to have heard the name, but she would call her husband. But the husband preferred to talk of America. He had a sister in Cleveland, and did we know the town? She was married to a saddler named King. So I told him I remembered the shop, that it used to be on the Public Square, and that there was a wooden horse in front painted red. "Its nostrils were distended," I added, "and it looked to my childish eye like an animal of dangerous hind legs." But now our new railroad station has swallowed up the block.

"But you don't know my sister?" he asked.

"Sorry," I replied.

"And I suppose," he added, "that no one wants a saddle now."

As for Hazlitt, he scratched his head. He didn't have time to go much into that kind of thing. Had we talked with Mr. Tibbs, who taught the day school? Great scholar, Tibbs! All hard questions were left to him. The school was down the street. We would know it by the children. His faith suggested Goldsmith's village teacher.

> And still they gaz'd, and still the wonder grew,
> That one small head could carry all he knew.

"We must find the Admirable Tibbs," said Collins, and off we pedaled through the village.

Winterslow sits delightfully along a ridge on a single

winding street of comfortable houses in shaded gardens. I recall no shops. Nowadays with motors, Salisbury is near enough to be the general market; but it was once far off, and somewhere surely there were shops in Winterslow for the smaller purchase of the week.

Our villages at home, unless they are in favored districts or are suburbs for city folk, are usually sloven, as if their people were on transient lease and would move away when the clutter choked them. They are of barren livelihood, where ugliness pays the larger wage. These villages of England, on the contrary, unless they be the dirty splatter from a filthy city, are clean and sweet. The houses attest the many generations of a single family that have taken pride in their honest building, in trees and gardens that only time can furnish. Here old folk "husband out life's taper at the close." And when another generation rises, there is merely a shift from a back bedroom to one that looks upon the street. In America, what is good enough for the parents is held to be shabby by the children. It is only our president who consents to live in an adopted house.

But Winterslow does not dwell in memories only. Toward the close of the nineteenth century what is called a land venture was started here. A great plot was sold in small garden holdings, each with a cottage. In America this would have been but a usual allotment, but land is scarce in England and it was a poor man's chance for an independent life. A court of peasant proprietors was set up.

The schoolhouse was a decent building with a gravel

space for games. These were in noisy progress as we advanced, but on the grass beside the street sat three little girls as prim as if they waited for their tea—creatures of Kate Greenaway, except for dress. I doubt if they played bare-legged football. Then a bell rang, and the schoolmaster appeared at the door to gather in his flock. For teachers must hush pleasure into duty.

But he was not Mr. Tibbs. He was new and, although he had some knowledge of Hazlitt, he could do no more than point out the house where he had lived. It was down the street, opposite the Nelson Inn. So there we went.

Two countrymen had laid off from work and we shared the tap with them. Nor did they decline beer. Crops and taxes, unemployment in the cities, the starving northern miners, the promise of Canada, the thinness of beer since the German war, the puzzle of American prohibition and our enormous wealth—these were our talk. None of them had ever heard of William Hazlitt.

"Mr. Tibbs would have known," said one old fellow, as he swished his beer. "Mr. Tibbs was the kind of man who would be always readin'. And when was this Mr. Hazlitt livin' hereabouts?"

"He came in 1808, and lived in and out of Winterslow, until his death in 1830," I answered.

The old man grinned and wagged his thumb toward his companion.

"I'm too young," he said. "Bill may remember him."

But, although Bill seemed the kind of man who would remember the heavy frost of 1860, he was dumb to Hazlitt.

And if strangers asked me about Noah Cleveland, I would myself plead ignorance. I could make no more than a gesture toward the lake, and say he came that way. But the beer was good, and a slab of beef had filled an emptiness.

We cast a glance at Sarah's house across the way.

"Shall we knock at the door," asked Collins, "and tell them we are literary pilgrims?"

"I have seen many sights today," I answered. "In that loose phrase that you despise, I am fed up. Let's go home to George. We may prevent him buying a highboy."

For the actual house did not rouse my curiosity. It marked but a sullen period in Hazlitt's life, and it was toward the Pheasant Hut that his memory turned. A tavern in single freedom is better than a thatched roof with an unlovely wife. Nor can I find any interest in Sarah Stoddart, except in her friendship for Charles and Mary Lamb; but as everyone liked them, it is not distinctive. She was a mercenary woman intent on settlement, who was previously engaged on and off to "a Mr. Turner, a Mr. White, a Mr. Dowling and a certain William." Of Hazlitt's talents she had no perception. He was merely a matrimonial harbor in a storm.

Yet Hazlitt must have been an irritating husband; for if a man always rails against the world and picks upon his friends, his perversity must show at home. His two

wives turned away from him, and the woman of whom he wrote his Liber Amoris—a girl of doubtful character—declined to exchange license into marriage. Hazlitt must have been an uneasy comrade. His wit was reserved for inns and chance acquaintance, and he was cheerful only on lonely roads and in meditation. His fidelity was for the dead.

But Charles and Mary Lamb visited the Hazlitts at Winterslow, and Mary wrote back to Sarah. "The dear, quiet, lazy, delicious month we spent with you is remembered by me with such regret, that I feel quite discontent and Winterslowish. I assure you, I never passed such a pleasant time in the country in my life, both in the house and out of it, the card playing quarrels, and a few gaspings for breath after your swift footsteps up the high hills excepted; and those drawbacks are not unpleasant in the recollection. We have got some salt butter to make our toast like yours, and we have tried to eat meat suppers, but that would not do, for we have left our appetites behind us. . . ."

We looked at the outside of the house made famous by salt butter, then coasted down the hill. And now the wind that had boosted us upon the slopes, whipped our faces in descent. It was noon when at last we came panting to the Red Lion. George met us with mighty tales of spinning wheels and samplers, and we sat for lunch at a window that looked upon the coach-yard.

There's likewise a wind on the heath

CHAPTER VII

AND NOW TO SARUM

Life is sweet, brother. . . . There 's day and night, brother, both sweet things; sun, moon, and stars, all sweet things; there 's likewise a wind on the heath.

AFTER his morning among cracked glass, which marvelously refreshed him, George was eager for a start. Last night his dark eye had lowered upon his wheel, and I had feared dirty work with a jackknife while the taproom slept. But his face shone now with what advertisements call a Kruschen joy. He threw almost a frisky leg across his saddle. He wobbled in a spasm of uncertain balance. Then he pedaled from the yard with a hump of samplers behind that seemed to plead for amputation.

"And where now?" asked Collins, curveting in pretty circles to catch a housemaid's eye, for women are his matinée.

"To Sarum," I answered, "the site of an ancient fort and temple, a lonely hill, a rotten borough that sent Pitt to parliament. I shall instruct you as we go along."

Whereat George and Collins frisked up hill, to escape the city and my lecture. Some day I shall hiss when Collins acts.

Salisbury sits in a shallow hollow by the river Avon. This is not Shakespeare's Avon, but its Wiltshire twin that flows south and washes the ships in Southampton Water—and yet, not its twin, for in England there are many Avons. Salisbury is of respectable age—does not its cathedral spring from the thirteenth century?—but it makes no consistent boast of its antiquity and is a clean little city of gridiron streets.

Salisbury is Barchester, and Trollope records in his Autobiography that when he was a traveling inspector of the post office, suggesting improvements in the service, the conception of a sequence of novels had flashed upon him as he had roamed the streets of a summer night. "I had stood for an hour on the little bridge in Salisbury," he wrote, "and had made out to my own satisfaction the spot on which Hiram's Hospital should stand." Up to this time Trollope's stories had failed, and the Warden was his first success. To a tourist's eye, Winchester and its Hospital of St. Cross fit better the mood of Barchester. For when I last saw St. Cross, there was smoke from every chimney and old folk sunned themselves upon the steps. But against Trollope's word, I must be silent.

On the outskirts of Salisbury there are many new

buildings in symmetrical range, erected by general contract to house the workmen of a factory. Their red roofs are a scar upon the city, as if progress had struck its ancient victim with an ugly knife.

Collins and George were on the crest of a hill in front. But the winds of Winterslow had advanced me toward senility, and I walked up the slope, easing my stomach on the saddle. The wind, too, now at our backs, had perversely fallen and did no more than pat me in grudging charity. I would gladly have exchanged the waving plains of Wiltshire for a flatter surface, for I find the world too old and wrinkled for cycling at its best. It was more agreeable before it cooled and roughened into mountains.

I said as much to Collins.

"Those must have been jolly days," he answered. "There were no hills in Eden. Adam didn't need a shift gear when he pushed his family round—Eve in the rumble, the twins in the forward basket."

"Old Sarum—" I began.

"Just a minute," interrupted George. "If my eyes do not deceive me yonder is a tavern on the edge of Sarum hill. If I must listen, let it be in comfort."

He took the easiest chair, and laid his feet upon the table.

"Remember," he said, "that brevity is the soul of wit."

"Old Sarum—" I began.

"My deepest apologies," said George, "but it occurs to me that a pewter cup of beer will help me through this ordeal. . . . Ah, and now please start."

"Old Sarum," I repeated, "stands on a hilltop a mile or so from Salisbury—"

"Up hill all the way. Put that in," said Collins.

It is a city of the dead, a mere mound of ruined foot-

Eve in the rumble, the twins in the forward basket

ings. Its origin, as told in legend, lies in days when London was a muddy village on a swampy river, when England itself was but a rumor in the Channel mirk. Its traditions run to the age of bronze and even into stone. Its lost records march with Stonehenge—

stronghold of a Celtic tribe of which all memory is gone. And like discovered Troy, the modern spade has dug through the strata of a dozen peoples here at Sarum, each town laid down upon its predecessor. For man follows nature's geologic method; whose history, also, is revealed in its many coats of rock.

In the later days, whose record is preserved, Old Sarum was a Roman town and fort. Excavation has yielded no great supply of relics from this period, yet the remnants of many Roman roads still radiate from this lonely hill to show its old importance. Then the Saxons came, but the destruction of their advance is lost, and it was only when this darker age was passed that the town appears again in record. Shortly after the Norman Conquest Old Sarum was of enough importance to merit the erection of a cathedral, and it was built to be one of the glories of the age. Its appearance can be surmised but not known, for only the line of its foundations is left. Even this was lost until, in turning the grass to furrows, the scars were found.

As the cathedral's use expanded, additions overran the original footings, and these too are evident to scholars. And prosperity, with its change of taste, put a flourish on the simple Norman walls, and time mellowed their construction.

And then, at the last of the twelfth century, it appeared that there was disadvantage in the site, and it was petitioned that the seat of the see be changed. Of this, old documents preserve the reasons. Water came only from a single well and an extra supply had to be carried in buckets from a distance up the hill.

And Old Sarum lay exposed to bitter wind, so that the voices and music of the mass were drowned in uproar on a blustering day. The hill, too, was chalk, and its glare was so blinding in the heat of summer that eyesight was impaired. Furthermore, there was disadvantage that a cathedral should stand within the compass of a fort. So long as a single authority ruled the two, the disadvantage could be held in check. But jealousies sprang up when there were rival masters on the hill. Nor was there the required space for the swelling group of buildings that were needed by the convent.

"Another beer," said George.

So, in the early thirteenth century a site was found a mile or two to the south where Salisbury now stands. So fast did the newer church progress that within a few decades a last stone capped its soaring spire. And this speed and unity mark Salisbury. Most cathedrals advanced intermittently through many centuries and change of taste. Their foundations perhaps were Norman with a touch of Saxon in the crypt, but the walls rose through the fashions of early English to continue into towers of decorated or perpendicular design. Nor are they even so simple as this sounds, for repairs to the structure were subsequently made in the current fashion, and we often find several centuries grouped as neighbors on a single wall. Or perhaps a round-arched Norman window at the base had been enlarged for greater light into the ampler dimensions permitted by the pointed arch and its developed mullions. And so we find a touch of the fourteenth and fifteenth cen-

turies quite near the ground, with the wall above it plainly in the fashion of two hundred years before. It would seem as if the ages stood upon their heads.

Cathedrals of this intricate contradiction, in many cases, are not only more beautiful, but they are a vivid record of man's ambition and the changing ideals that have marked his growth. It is because of this that architecture is so real a chapter in the annals of history. Even a trivial knowledge of its forms is the clew of war and peace, as the church turned from a soldier's Norman model into peaceful early English, of frontier strife and ease, of ascetic days and years of wealth, of ripeness that softened to decay. So the spirit and thought of England, its progress into peace through many hundred years, may be studied at Canterbury, at Chester and at many another cathedral. But Salisbury is a cold and perfect building, now stripped even of its early glass, and it has not that variety of suggestion that guides us through the advancing strife of aspiration. For these reasons I would not place it among the first of the English cathedrals.

With the dedication of the new edifice and the springing of the town about its close, the older building on the hill fell to neglect. Already much of its material had served for the walls of Salisbury, and later when repairs were needed, Old Sarum was a convenient quarry. Nor was its stone used only for the newer church, for a growing town has secular uses. Bit by bit the Norman church was pulled apart, until at last it was only in a dry summer when the hill was parched that its footings showed through the grass.

The last phase but one was a peaceful hilltop whose mighty trees gave shelter to no man, whose grass waved undisturbed by any human foot. Sheep and cattle were its only tenants, and its only clamor was the wind. Nature's conquest had subdued the Roman and the Saxon.

"Are you nearly finished?" asked George.

"Almost," I answered.

"Then I suggest that we climb and sit upon this hill and see these marvels for ourselves. Just a minute. This last drop. It was our own Longfellow, a poet whom you despise, who counseled us to be up and doing."

We left the tavern at the rear and followed a sloping path that crossed a moat half silted up. An old fellow hobbled from his hut at the entrance and extracted copper.

"This gate—" I started.

"I think," said George, "that I have heard enough. Find me a patch of softest sod where I may lay my Saxon bones."

So I found him a bed of grass upon the south with a view of Salisbury's spire.

"This is the place," said George. "Nature has a soft heart. I'll lie here. Resume your mutterings—softly, and I'll sleep."

Antiquarians, I continued, lately arrived with spade and shovel. In their zeal for discovery the trees were uprooted and trenches were laid to expose the forgotten footings. Heaps of stone and rubble were piled high. When I was last here four years ago the entire hill was

a camp of workers, and wheelbarrows rumbled all day with refuse to be sorted. From this disorder the hill now rests, and a visitor may study the line of walls and towers, the pavement of a kitchen, the moat for their defense. He may peep within a well or descend to cellars. Still better he may stand on this elevation to the south and mark the footings of the old cathedral halfway down the slope.

Collins had found a bed of softest turf. He had put back his head upon his arms. "Tell it all to George," he said. He pulled his béret across his eyes, and slept.

And now the wind is again of Roman mind and Old Sarum is its journey. Hereabouts it speaks in Latin tongue, and its gossip with the leaves is phrased in the easy rhythm of hexameter sighing upward from the plain. And the crescendo of a later mass still haunts the hill—a far-off choir chanting in forgotten vaults—old voices of an age of faith before a northern frost had split the rock of Peter.

Collins was emitting a fuzzy sound. He is an incessant talker when awake; and I must suppose that when his tongue hangs idle as he sleeps, his breath frets at its confinement. As it is then untutored by the brain in the refinements of language, it puffs and murmurs. So George wakened him by placing a large Saxon stone on his Celtic stomach.

"Lay off," said Collins, and he sat up blinking.

We looked at this and that. We poked at walls to speculate where the old construction was joined to new. We laid a guess where a Saxon trowel displaced

the Roman, where a Norman mason had pieced a former fabric. Then we went again to the tavern at the foot of the hill to refresh our tired machinery.

I found a bench in front of the empty hearth where I could stretch full length and look up the chimney until it narrowed to a slit of sky. The stones were smudged with the smoke of hospitality that had roared on winter nights.

I was lapsing into sleep when the landlord roused me. It was closing time, whereafter man may neither drink nor sleep.

"Must we get out?" I asked.

"It 's the law," he answered.

"And is this the ease," I grumbled, "that a man takes in his inn?"

"Sorry," said the landlord.

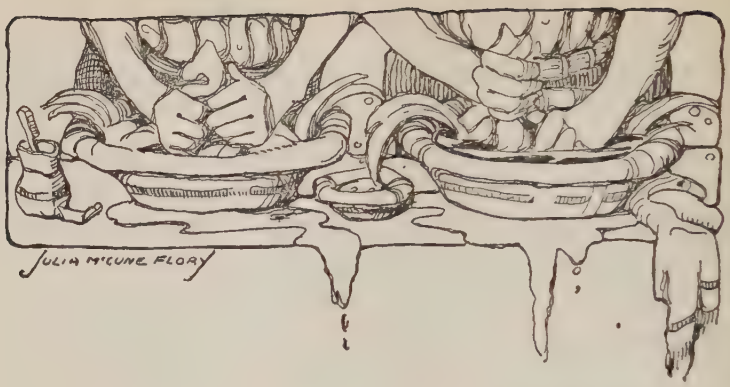
We took to the road, and coasted from Old Sarum to the north.

And presently in a swirl of rain we crowded for shelter beneath the projecting thatch of a shop that catered to the crossroads. An old man kept company with us. He was in despondent mood. Work of his sort was hard to get, and at best he could have held but a puttering job. He was the kind of man from which nature always contrives its village cobblers, and he wore stage whiskers and a make-up. I do not know whether men in England persist to an extreme age, or whether they merely seem old; for when teeth are gone and rheumatism has come, who shall be the judge? Teeth are still used in England, but not as decoration. A molar to be honest as this world goes, is to be one tooth out of

ten thousand. British gift horses keep their mouths shut. St. Cuspid's shrine is desolate.

Our road lay in rolling country with the Avon to the west. Hereabouts the map shows many marks of camps and ditches, with indication that this was a center of population in ancient days.

It was tea time when we rode into Amesbury, and we elected to spend the night at the George Hotel.



Nor may Collins and I be denied our epic hour

CHAPTER VIII

AMESBURY AND STONEHENGE

Hic et Ubique.

WE were given excellent rooms at the George, which is a clean hotel of pleasant invitation in the center of the town and is frequented by aviation officers and their wives.

George popped out at once for samplers, but Collins and I laid off our boots and slept. And now I ask your patience in a vulgar interlude. We did the family wash. Did not blind Homer chance once upon the Phæacian shore where Nausicaä and her maidens rose at dawn to scour their garments? Nor may Collins and I be denied our epic hour. Each hook and knob, the bedposts, the curtain rods, each chair and stand, were soon decked with a snowy burden. Collins sang like Madame Sans Gêne beside her tub. Then from our shiney bath we trod the stairs to see the town.

Amesbury is a quiet village on the Avon. It is of vast antiquity and is said to be named possibly from Ambrosius, a Roman leader who checked the Saxon pirates in the fifth century when first the empire cracked. Anyway Ambrosius chose Amesbury for his burial—"a place as it were of national sepulchre"—which shows the town's importance. For Amesbury and Glastonbury, perhaps as early as the first century, were the chief centers of primitive Christianity. Even Canterbury in comparison is an upstart. The Plain of Salisbury, with its Celtic Stonehenge and Christian Amesbury, is deeply marked with great religions. Through all this western country there is a whisper that gods profane and sacred have had their habitation here. A solemn spirit invests the hills, and western winds echo discarded ritual. There is something of magic in the Celt, and a twilight of belief lives forever in his march.

Amesbury today is a lovely village of woods and river. It merits a tourist's interest, yet motors seldom halt in the frenzy to see Stonehenge. We sat on the Avon's bridge and watched the stream as it halted in a pool above the dam.

Water sings on journey and its merriest tune is at the start. At dawn in freshest mood it tumbles from the hills. Through all the morning it bears the brisk rumor of the woods, and from the upland towns their shallow gossip. At noon with scarcely lessened speed it sweeps the waving grass where cattle graze. With lightest step it treads the afternoon. But when shadows lengthen, marching now in a broader company of wa-

ters, the stream at last grows tired. Its legs, so frisky on a downward path, droop to an amble on the flats. This is the hour when every traveler turns to shelter. Men in their ignorance think a mill wheel is wholly set for grinding wheat, and they are unaware that the pool above its dam serves chiefly as the river's tavern for the night. In this quiet water it throws aside its weary boots. The moon is its candle on the taproom stairs, and the starlit sky its dream.

The Avon put off its boots too soon. The sun rode high as we rested on the bridge, yet the water slept below and the grasses scarcely yielded to the idle current. A leaf floated in the eddy, and it was a pilot out betimes to catch the drifting galleons of September.

We climbed from our perch upon the bridge to see the town, and chiefly the parish church of St. Mary and St. Melor, whose yard near-by is the haunt of legend.

For at Amesbury we touch on the story of King Arthur. Quiet as it lies among the trees of the Avon, this village is cousin to Camelot for whose identity a dozen towns contend. Amesbury is of gentler kin to the ruins of Tintagel where Arthur's broken castle endures the storm, to Winchester that points a boasting finger at the Round Table, to Avalon once rising from the sea; and yet it has suggestion of Geraint and Enid, of Gareth and Lynette, of Merlin who sleeps forever in the hills of Wales.

For once upon a time Queen Guinevere came here to take the veil. And here she spent the remnant of her life in penance for her guilty love of Lancelot, whom she had seen from her window in a tower before

In the sluggish pool she had foreseen the ending of her life

she became King Arthur's wife. She had stood upon an older bridge across the Avon, and in the sluggish pool she had foreseen the ending of her life when the convent gate should close upon her guilt. The great trees about the parish yard still stir in evening wind with the tale of her repentance.

Even to a casual eye Amesbury church shows a puzzling mixture of construction. In the nave's south wall a decorated window stands between earlier lancets, and Tudor mullions are set in a transept's earlier work. The tower betrays the markings of a steeper roof, long since cut to an easier angle. A hurried glance shows Norman and Early English, and the century of decorated art. More shrewdly one will find a Saxon cross, perpendicular tracery and the final remodeling of the nineteenth century. Such mixture, as I have said before, is common enough in English churches; yet practice is often needed to split them into parts. Amesbury is of franker surface. Many centuries seem openly tossed within a hat and the walls are of checkered alteration. Nor does this inconsistency mar the whole.

Each age of builders has followed a pattern of its own, and the fashion of a woman's dress today is not more fixed in change for any given season. The mason of the age of lancets looked with distaste upon the Norman's rounded windows. Then lancets came to be set in groups of two, with an upper light; which later bound them in a single pattern when mullions came to use. When these simple lines were not enough to express the taste of growing wealth, gorgeous tracery was added; to rise later in upright lines and be the

style that is called perpendicular. But with the Reformation the hand of death fell on these churches, and architecture turned its secular skill to the fashioning of country houses.

Yet this changing advance and decline were not mere chance. Their basis rests on history, and either may be the other's handmaid. A sturdy wall, a narrow window, a crenelated tower, mark Norman days, when builders worked for a soldier and took their first instruction from the castles that guarded his conquest. The pointed lancet of the thirteenth century is a softer aspiration that found its release in beauty. Then wealth, ripeness and surrender at the sixteenth century's thrust of colder reason.

One wonders why our inartistic century admires these churches. We scorn tradition. We seek to build the world afresh. We overthrow the dogmas of conduct, of government and art. Our hands are red with slaughtered formulæ. Periods of better taste than ours neglected these ancient buildings. When Henry VIII destroyed the monastic system, his loot was merely gold, the obvious jewels and vestments, and the lead upon the roofs. In the century of Milton they were a common quarry for stables and pigsties. Even the repairs of the early nineteenth century were so ignorantly boggled that it would have been better if the walls had been left in ruin. But now our age, that is so irreverent to older standards, touches these antiquities with caressing hand, and it pronounces its curse on those who alter to an inch these older walls of England.

The love of these ancient churches is so recent. Gothic in the eighteenth century was a synonym for rude and uncouth. It was a northern barbarism opposed to the culture of formal Italian style. When Wrenn put up his London churches at the end of the seventeenth century it was a last wave of the Renaissance washing against the shore of England. But Italian fashions persisted to Victorian days, and even now they furnish the style of our public buildings.

In our love of Gothic do we live only in a fad, and is our interest akin to our collections of cracked china? I must put these questions to George, and he will turn Gothic into the discussion of highboys and spinning wheels.

Collins and I were advancing to the door when we were met by the vicar. He nodded and asked if he might be of service. I fell on him with so many questions that presently he let his tea grow cold and spent an hour with us. There is a ruin of Saxon wall at the border of the graveyard, a Saxon cross within the nave, a line of ancient corbeling—and these he fetched to our attention.

The vicar was a Mr. Moxom, rather a young man who had but lately come to residence, but alive to every point of beauty. I inquired whether he were connected with the Moxom, once the famous London publisher, but it was quite distant. He asked about our trip and, on our telling him our course lay north through Marlborough, he regretted that we could not turn aside to Laycock Abbey which was a favorite of his. He then wished us a pleasant journey, waved his

hand and went off to tea, which must now have been stale and cold.

Presently we found George mooning in the village streets. Amesbury is barren of sampler shops, and of a consequence it does not stand with him as high as Salisbury.

We did ourselves well at dinner, as the English say. Then in early twilight we set out afoot to Stonehenge, a few miles to the west. The wind now rested, and the sky had exchanged its rainy garment for a robe of softest blue.

I have seen Stonehenge in broad daylight but it is then not at its best, for fancy is of Latin blood even in the north and it sleeps at noonday. Stonehenge then is but a broken circle of upright and fallen stones—a litter, which to the eye alone, is not remarkable. Nor does the booth for tickets and the barbed wire fence stretched around, supply imagination its proper food.

Stonehenge by day is barren. It sits in the center of a rolling plain that is chiefly used now for air flight. A row of ugly hangars stands upon the south, and there are workshops left from the war with Germany, now silent and abandoned. Editorials appear in the London papers, how they mar the scene. So at noonday the plain suggests the jealousies of nations and the preparations for defense. Motor cycles, with officers in their side cars, snort upon the roads, and battalions of airplanes wheel and dip to tax the British pound.

I have seen Stonehenge in driving rain. This is better, for in the scurry of a storm the vague creatures of the past appear. The wind of that gusty day blew

phantoms from the Devon moors and the ghostly hills of Wales—from Cornish cromlechs and wherever the Celtic race abides.

And now I have seen it in the thickening light. And this is best. Daytime is wholly ours, and only the present can flourish in the sun's hot ray. But meditation rises with the night to demand for its vagrant foot a wider space. When shadows enfold our eyes, the ancient world blows its windy bugle to the hills. Wherever man has left an empty plain, there do its ghosts parade—and darkness is freighted with the past.

Ranges of hills converge on Stonehenge, and each was the path of pilgrims. Its stones are the remnant of a great circle with an altar at the middle. It was a worship of fire, and it is computed that sunrise on the longest day of summer slants among the upright stones exactly to the altar. It was an age of Druids, of bronze implements and human sacrifice—a survival in these islands of a primitive civilization and worship that once covered the whole of northern Europe, that was sprinkled beyond the Alps.

We walked for a half hour and at last, where the road had climbed a hill, we saw Stonehenge below us in the valley. On a line of hills stood the workshops of the war. As the night mists smudged them out, one may vainly hope that strife has passed forever.

At the hilltop George and I sat beside the road but, as Collins had never seen Stonehenge near at hand, he pelted down the hill. Soon we saw his shadow on the white road, and then the darkness thickened. He was just another ghost lost in the silence of the valley.

On our homeward walk we should have talked of Druids, but our gossip was of friends. George knows everybody and if you mention anyone, he will tell you the name of her aunt and the reason she left her husband.

Our landlord had left the door unlocked, and so we climbed to bed. Our washing, except for woolen stockings, was quite dry. And so we fell to sleep.

I think that sod buys best

CHAPTER IX

WIDOWS, PIANOS, AND A FEW LOW NOTES UPON THE BOOM JUG

With hey, ho, the wind and the rain.

WE spent the next morning during incessant downpour in the parlor of the George Hotel. Collins, with his usual optimism, thrust his head every few minutes between the bird cage and the lace curtain to announce a clearing sky. George addressed post cards to his widows.

I do not know why George affects these relics of mankind. He may resemble Sir Roger de Coverley who had so tense an affair with a widow that forever afterward any bit of weed stirred its pleasant echo. Did not his very clothes persist in the fashion of that year when his addresses were rejected? But George's clothes are new enough, nor do I suspect a tender passage unrequited. He plays about his widows like harmless summer lightning.

It is only by knowing George that one may realize how thickly death's black arrows have fallen on the ranks of men. The sixth and seventh decades seem trod by velvet slippers only. Secretly George must rejoice when he sees men grueling at business to exhaustion, for this dirty overwork leads to a quicker day of lilies and another widow for his shop. It is his business, as well as his delight, to cultivate these charming domestic remnants.

"Which do you prefer?" I once asked. "Grass or sod?"

"Ah," said George, "were t'other dear charmer away. Your question needs thought." He paused. "I think that sod buys best. Theirs is the purer release, unmixed with quibbling alimony, and the all is greater than a part. I sold my paper weights to sod."

"And your china elephants?" I persisted.

"It is strange," answered George, and a film of meditation suffused his eyes. "Her husband is still living. Dear me! He seldom gets a holiday. It is sad how the dear fellow overworks."

George dropped his voice to a confidential hush.

"A widow, I speak of sod, has seen the worst of life, and yet has found an honorable release. Her primness has mellowed to humanity, and she looks with a softer eye upon our frailties. Having tried once vainly to reform a husband, she does not molest a bachelor's sins."

George went back to his post cards, which were soon as thick as a pile of waffles.

In the meantime Collins had found a piano of the kind that so often infects the English inns. These discordant relics have done their bit to blunt the British taste for music.

I have always wondered what becomes of old pianos. They are not the sort of thing that goes off in a wagon with the broken chairs, nor do they ascend to the attic with a horsehair sofa. They never wear out entirely. I have passed fields of abandoned motors. In a back yard I have seen the family's discarded tonneau planted out with flowers; and a boiler from behind the kitchen stove, cut to be a tub of pansies. A baby cart, when bereft of its living tenant, is trundled off by the colored laundress; and hereafter she will fetch the wash in easier comfort. But pianos, even when eighty years and more are gone, although hopeless invalids, linger forever on the border of the grave.

One of these octogenarians—of hardened, rattling arteries, yellow-toothed, a victim as it seemed of pyorrhea—had found its aged home in the parlor of the George Hotel.

Collins moved back the family portraits and the

vases, brushed away the fringe, and made a few guesses at Wagner. I have known many men who can discourse sweet music on a well-conditioned piano, but Collins plays best in adversity. He asks only that there be sufficient rumble in the bass. If a piano be like the toad, ugly and venomous, then does he search with happiest inspiration its precious jewel of song.

I shut the door and put a chair against it, to bar the German racket from the British army.

Collins has confided to me that his method is to sweep first the general keyboard. If each key yields a pleasant fruitage somewhat near the proper pitch, he plays an older melody where the tune shall count. But if his fingers fall on silent ivories, or all or most are sour and flat, then he essays a repertoire of modern music where the piano's discrepancies will not show above the composer's intended discord. Stravinsky has been his favorite in the English countryside, for with this genius a broken advance along the scale does but add a pinch of mystery and charm.

Is it not possible that our advanced impressionists have picked their tunes on pianos of this sort, until their flatness has seemed a normal octave? De Bussey, in his quest for novelty, invented his own scale. If the aged piano of his attic were fetched to light, it might explain how an honest intention toward accepted harmonies was thrown to discord.

I have not myself an exacting ear. While a piece is played, I fret for a phrase that will express my gratitude and not my ignorance. I am the man who murmurs,

"How charming!" from a corner of the room. Yet I can say "Tell me the name of that!" with an inflection that suggests it is the only piece in Christendom I happen to forget. Or if a Wagner *motif* is mentioned, I can drum my fingers to the tune. But my hints on music are not accepted by my betters. I shall rehearse an episode in point.

Several years ago, while I was sitting for lunch on the terrace of the Capuchin convent at Amalfi, I observed a slender orchestra of four that was dispensing music to the tourists. There were two violins, and one of those common nasal instruments whose name I never know that takes its puffing at the end. Obviously the fourth performer should have played a bass viol. But instead—and I notice your surprise—he clasped to his Italian stomach an enormous earthen wine jug. Ah, I said, this is care-free south. The fellow does but hold refreshment for his betters. Presently all four will sit and drink. The tune that follows will be the livelier for the interruption.

I was still approving the fellow's kind attentions, when of a sudden—quite to my amazement—he leaned forward, expanded his cheeks and uttered a boom in the great jug's narrow mouth. The sound reverberated around the echoing cavern and issued in a prolonged legato; nor was its melody inferior to that scraped upon a string. The boom was not to advertise his wine, for it proved the jug was empty. It was a dry and wholesome sound, without that sucking gurgle which would arise if lees were left. Then presently, as the tune required it, he issued another boom, this time of higher

He clasped to his Italian stomach an enormous earthen wine jug

pitch; and now, the violins being of quickened ecstasy, he did his bit in a pretty run to keep them company.

My fork held a yard of dripping spaghetti, but I laid it by enchanted. Such delicacy of higher fluting, such somber thumping of the lower notes, such frail booming of a trill, were beyond any sounds that had ever floated to my ear.

I have never been partial to the bass viol, for it seems a sullen instrument. It is the mere tum-tum of humdrum bass. It is played always by men of melancholy aspect who do but saw a livelihood. Whether only black-livered fellows are attracted by its dismal croak, or whether its croak has reduced to misery natures that were happy once, it is certain that none but morose sounds issue from its distempered belly. I have wanted to ask a bass viol about the mortgage on his house, and whether as a child he played with blocks. One cannot conceive him entrusted with a tune, or doing his part to help the amorous tenor win his lady. He is a toad among the happy crickets.

And here in contrast is the boom jug, a merry dog with a joyous past. Beaded bubbles have winked upon its brim, and still it bears an odor from the feast. It needs but a puff to play, for there are no vocal cords to be squeezed and strangled by the fingers. Nor is practice needed, for one has only to slip his boom carefully to pitch before he looses the tempest from his lungs. The boom jug, moreover, is an instrument that can be carried without nuisance on a street car (no boosting on the steps), and it yields a pleasant sniff

en route. I do not know the price of a bass viol, but in Amalfi an excellent boom jug can be purchased for eighty-nine cents.

The ocean sparkled far below with added beauty from the sound. The sky was of a deeper blue. Surf fringed the cliffs with pointed lace. I sipped Capri and coiled spaghetti. But as yet I had not foreseen how my discovery might profit my native town.

Shortly after this, when I was home in Cleveland, I found myself at dinner with the distinguished conductor of our orchestra—ninety pieces, if you count them. Marvelously as they perform, this mighty company runs each year in debt and it is only by an appeal to the innocent that they are kept in funds. Eight bass viols are required to provide a sufficient croak. It was then that the idea popped upon me.

"Nicolai," I cried, "I have a thought. Suspend your soup and give me ear."

And I told him of the boom jug—its resonant tone, its flexibility and cheapness. Then and there I offered myself and seven unpaid companions to stand on the highest platform at the rear and replace the expensive bass viols. As one man, with but an evening's practice, we would throw our united boom into any mighty crash of brass at the signal of his wiggling finger.

Musically he was persuaded, but a thought of eight mortgages checked his thrifty judgment. Since the rejection of my generous offer, I have been timid with my opinions.

The piano of the George Hotel was sound of tooth—

merely incipient pyorrhea that would have yielded to a brush—and so with a pretty rattle in the bass Collins played us the fire music. He performed with such energy that I had thought the ornamental logs all frilled with paper would burst to smoke. But they were of English temperament that is not inflamed by mere excitement.

It was a hearth not large enough to warm a doll's house. George blotted a widow and sneezed, so he blotted her again. The room was cold with that penetrating dampness that the English love. If no moss flourishes on the table legs, they proclaim it stuffy and open a window so that a chilly wind may blow about the ears.

We spent a month in the parlor of the George Hotel between breakfast and noon, for eternity is squeezed within a morning for him who awaits the English sun. I have now a sympathetic understanding of Noah and his crowded animals.

"My post cards are complete," said George.

"Study your list," I replied. "An omission will cost you the sale of a highboy."

"I have thought of that already," answered George. "It is Veronica who compiles the names from the ledger."

He put stamps on his cards, and old horse on his tongue.

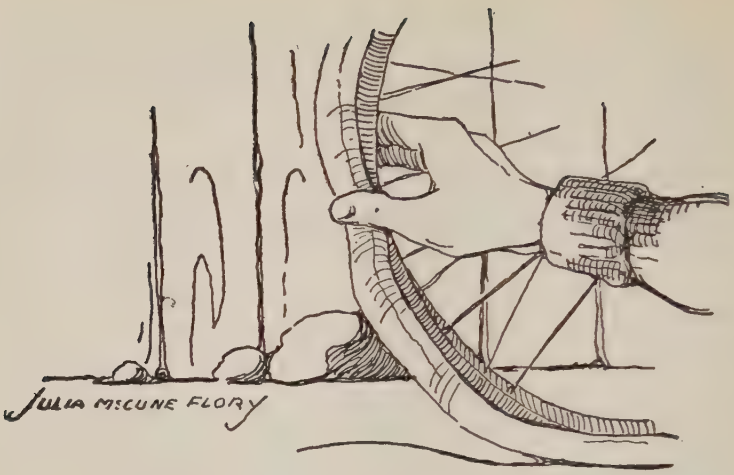
"I think," said Collins, gazing once more between the lace curtain and the bird cage, "I think that the clouds are lifting."

And at that moment the sun struck through.

"Ah," said George. "Replace the tidy, the fringe, the portraits and the vases, and then we'll start."

And so we did.

We'll now put aside these rainy pages, and begin a fresh chapter for our travels north.



Collins will always acknowledge a duty

CHAPTER X

WE LODGE WITH MRS. SPUGGINS

But travelers must be content.

"I THINK," said Collins in the shed, pressing a thumb against his wheel, "that my rear tire needs air."

"Why not pump it?" I asked.

"Dear, dear!" said Collins, for he will always acknowledge a duty, even if he slights it.

And now sunlight was too precious for delay.

Past azure puddles at the roadside, each with its drop of sky, past fields of dripping green, we pedaled to the north.

Near Durrington are the marks of a British village, for all this country was the scene of prehistoric life.

At Milston, just across the Avon, Joseph Addison

was born; and here his father was curate of the old church that still stands, although the parsonage is gone. Edward Hutton, who writes of Wiltshire, believes that it was the memory of these downs and their expanse of sky that fostered his famous hymn.

> Soon as the evening shades prevail
> The moon takes up the wondrous tale
> And nightly to the listening earth
> Proclaims the story of her birth.

The lines are so ingrained in our common love, that it is doubtful whether we prize them less than the Spectator itself with its Will Wimble and Sir Roger. They are of an easy melody that sings a child to sleep.

At Netheravon on our way Sydney Smith was curate after he left Oxford. It was then a remote town far from a coach road and of slim advantage for a man of talent. He served two years, and his chief accomplishment in such barren circumstance was a Sunday School for the rudiments of education. Letters then were given only to the children of the rich, and for the poor even a session once a week was uncommon.

Sydney Smith lived afterwards in Edinburgh and London. He was one of three to found the Edinburgh Review, the pioneer of British quarterlies and the caustic organ of the Whigs. His London church drew fashion. He was famous for his sermons, his lectures, his essays and his wit. This wit is dull reading now; for his, or anybody's is a melting bubble. Of Netheravon, his daughter, Lady Holland wrote, "Once a week, a butcher's cart comes over from Salisbury; it

was only then that he could obtain any meat, and he often dined on a mess of potatoes sprinkled with a little ketchup. Too poor to command books, his only resource was the squire, and his only relaxation long walks over these interminable plains. . . ."

Sydney Smith was curate here in 1794–6, when an eighteenth century despised village life to find its stimulus in cities. Every wit from Addison to Lamb was content to view the world from the traffic of the Strand. Wordsworth was the first, and he was not a wit, who found his material in the countryside. When his group was dubbed the Lake Poets, it was with derisive tongue in cheek. And we can understand this slight toward village life when we realize an England of muddy roads, villages that journeyed no farther than a market town, few schools, no penny post, and a bare seclusion. Yet Netheravon, as we saw it under the drifting clouds, seemed a lovely village where a country preacher might mingle now in good society.

At Upavon we lunched in an inn beside the road. The dining room was on the second floor and, during the rattle of preparation, we slept in great leather chairs. The proprietor had been a smoke room steward on the steamship Majestic and, finding that I had crossed with him, he affected to remember me and was at once my friend. George nosed along the old prints upon the walls; but most of them were whisky advertisements and, although he found the subject of interest, he pronounced their art negligible. There is a verve, he said, in Scotch, that does not lend itself to still life.

Presently other hungry folk came in, and one of them pulled a bell cord that hung against the wall. And I wished that I had seen it first, for it is a lordly gesture. These broad ribbons from the ceiling mark a leisured world. Their tinkle is a placid message to the kitchen that a velvet waistcoat awaits its lunch.

I remember at Upavon a bridge where the Avon rested in a pool, and a ford where horses drank. I recall a parish church that seemed lost behind the High Street shops. And for a while we could not find it. The tower arose here and there at a changing angle, yet we had gone roundabout before we found an entrance past cluttered houses to its yard. Perhaps the church, once the center of village life, had fallen sour in its neglected days, to wander off behind the shops and sulk among the gravestones. Yet there was something rather perky about the tower, and it rose from the roofs as if it might still be curious towards its parishioners—as if it peeped into windows with God's vicarious eye to learn whether recreant prayers were said at home.

This tower is of the thirteenth century, when any church tower worth its salt concerned itself with everybody's morals.

And there were Norman remnants in the chancel. A stone wall surrounds the graveyard, and a taller ghost on tiptoe could spy upon a neighbor's wash. Beyond the wall a shabby wooden building with broken windows proclaims itself the Victoria Hall. It dates from the architectural degradation of the nineteenth century, but the broken litter is our own.

Upavon rests in a break of the downs with the Vale of Pewsey east and west upon the north, and with farther hills that stretch from Marlborough to Devizes.

Here we were to leave the Avon. Nor do I recall a stream that wanders in a more contented leisure. Each bend has enfolded a lovely village, with a church tower to mark it from a distance. And our road has paused on every bridge to pass the time of day with water whose employment is the shallow guidance of the drifting leaves. Our course, moreover, being more direct than the winding stream, has sometimes skipped a village, and we have seen it from the hillside. Each cross-road, therefore, has been an invitation to descend to roofs that winked in sunlight. A preacher with a fondness for a peaceful scene—mornings of study, tennis of an afternoon, tea in the garden, and an evening hour of gossip—might pitch with profit on any of these villages that lie upon the Avon.

Above Upavon we crossed the Vale of Pewsey. Hutton writes with enthusiasm of this valley, and praises its fertility and its lovely villages. Indeed, if I had read his book before the trip, I would have increased our journey to Devizes—Latin corrupted from *Ad Divisas*—to learn whether this town deserves his exalted praise.

But we had Oare Hill ahead of us, and the road's long ribbon to the top was enough for our whole attention. Collins was in front, and he dismounted at the foot.

When we came up, his thumb was on his tire.

"I think," he said, "that my rear wheel is soft."

"Then why not pump it?" suggested George.

"It seems a great deal of trouble," answered Collins.

Three stomachs rested on three saddles as we climbed the hill, for the stomach is always coddled.

Once George stopped, deliberating whether it might be better to throw himself across the wall and bounce to a final rest. Collins is never out of breath, but then he is only a half-pint. George and I carry larger factories of digestive purpose.

As we climbed, the world stood up on tiptoe and far-off valleys came crowding in.

At the top of Oare Hill we lay beside the road with our faces to the north where the town of Marlborough lay concealed among farther hills. And somewhere hereabouts, if we had known in what point to look, was Savernake Forest, of which I shall write hereafter.

It is only the cyclist and pedestrian who can know the joy of lying on a hilltop; for its restful view may not be valued except by him who buys with the coin of effort. Moderately, of course; for George's unthrifty speed had thrown him to a coma.

Collins was again thumbing his tire, with something of Hamlet's indecision when he contemplates revenge. He decided, however, that it was nobler in the mind to suffer, than to pump it.

I lay upon my back and watched the passage of the clouds. I heard the wind upon the slope; and it also was of ample waistline, for it panted to the top.

And then I slept.

George and I were awakened by Collins.

"I am inclined to think," he said, "that I ought to fix that tire."

"Then why—why in the name of Willie's bright blue pants," said George, "don't you?"

"It is the labor involved," Collins answered, and he lay back upon the grass.

"Don't forget to disturb me again," said George, "if you have any more important news." And he slept once more.

But my reply was in harsh vernacular.

And now, leaving for a moment these three pathetic figures sleeping by the road, I must throw into parenthesis a simple household remedy that I have just discovered.

The picture is of myself tapping out this narrative some six months later.

For the last hour my typewriter has squeaked whenever I pushed its carriage along the track. It is a California machine, and it may have been jealous of my praise of England. I thought of this at once. So in experiment I wrote that Los Angeles would soon have a population of five millions. But the squeak lay deeper than mere resentful temperament. It is not entirely true that a soft word is better than a drop of oil.

It was this rasping sound that accounts for my ugly language on Oare Hill; for no writer can be so absorbed in his narrative that he is proof against disagreeable circumstance. Did not Coleridge confess that a paragraph of Christabel was ruined by the untimely calving of his neighbor's cow? And when the placid Words-

worth called for a candle in the night to scratch down verses, any slopping of the tallow on the cotton sheets must have marred his style.

I looked in my desk for oil; but I am far from home in a hotel that doesn't cater to writers. I can't even get a table big enough to hold my elbows, and my papers keep dropping on the floor. And there was no oil. There were a thousand oil shafts near-by at Long Beach, but my desk hadn't a drop of it. What, I reasoned, would the Admirable Crichton have done with such a squeak? For I find this method of calling to the spirit of an ingenious man of more avail than the western cry that God is good.

And the answer came.

Being lately troubled with a cold in the head—*a gold in de 'ed*,—I had by me a tube of catarrh jelly which explodes in the nostril when a bulb is squeezed. And this, when Crichton answered me, I applied to the metal track. Need I say more? By pulling the carriage back and forth until the healing lotion was smeared upon it, the squeak departed. I now typed the statement that California marred its beauty by billboards, by boasting, by real-estate activity and its silly new religions. Nor did the track once squeak.

Such is the jelly maker's modesty that he has omitted this use from his label, and he states merely his claim against hay fever, rose colds, catarrh and dread consumption. Dear doctor, I add a squeak. It is to writers only I offer this hint. A tube for squeezing. Adjust the applicator and expel with pressure on the rubber bulb. Sixty cents from any druggist!

We mounted stiffly, and coasted down to Marlborough.

At the Castle and Ball Hotel, where we inquired for lodging, we were told that all the rooms were full. In Marlborough is one of England's public schools, and this was a day of celebration. There was a cricket game, a dance, the awarding of prizes in subsidiary studies, and a concourse of proud relatives. The other hotels were full, and so was Avebury, ten miles off. It appeared, however, that a Mrs. Spuggins took lodgers on these crowded days. If we would turn several corners and rap at a certain house, a little girl would show us the accommodation offered.

We followed our instruction, and a mite of seven answered to our knock. She looked inquiringly at our wheels, and told us to lead them through an alley at the rear and into the garden. We found the woodshed crowded, so we leaned them on bushes.

We entered the house through a summer kitchen, a sleepy shed that laid its head on the shoulder of the house, like a flapper returning from a picnic. In the dining room we found the little girl entertaining two cats, a dog and a canary. The room was just large enough to hold a meager supper table, three straight chairs and a sofa. There was an oven in the wall, with crockery along the mantel. A staircase plunged in darkness to the upper story.

The little girl laid down a cat, which stretched its back and paws like a larger inchworm when it goes a-walking. She carried the other cat up the stairs ahead of us, and it winked across its shoulder as if it knew already that our bedroom was a jest.

Ours was the room in front. It was at once apparent that two beds must serve for three. One of them was a tubercular cot of sunken chest, which not even a tube of jelly could have saved. The other was of double width and it sagged connubially toward the middle. A man's clothes hung on a chair back, and there were shaving gear and unwiped soap upon the seat. The little girl assured us, however, that her mother would arrange the room when she returned at night. She was now working in the hotel kitchen as an extra hand.

"It's going to be pretty tight," said George. He poked his thumb at the thin mattress of the cot. "Whoever gets this, will have the pattern of buttonhooks across his back."

But we took the room, swept the clothing to the wardrobe, and laid down a clutter of our own. We gave the one chair to George, and Collins and I made each a little midden in a corner.

As it was but the middle of the afternoon, we decided to visit Savernake Forest at the edge of town. As we took our wheels, Collins again remarked upon his tire, and there was spice in the answer. Then we toiled up through an open meadow to the woods.

The New Forest is but a fragment, Sherwood and Arden are for the most part bare of trees; but Savernake is still a forest that fits a nursery tale. On a hilltop that stretches wide above the town, it presents a façade of mighty beeches which serve as a portico to the dim aisles inside. These living columns stand at even intervals, rising to vaults of pointed Gothic. Or one might think, if another figure is preferred, that like

Napoleon's guard, no tree had been admitted until its height and girth were measured.

The nave beyond dwarfs Chartres, and it extends past countless transepts until its chancel is lost in shadow. Nor are Chartres' majestic windows of so soft a light as here filters through the trees, for their glazing stirs in wind until the colored pattern is alive.

Forests usually are breeding ground for sprouts and saplings, but Savernake stands full-grown, swept clean of underbrush. Is it a childless wood, or may one think that the little beeches have gone walking in the meadows with their nurse? For Savernake, like a sullen landlord of a city, denies its space to creatures with a family. It is the most majestic forest I have seen in England.

I wish that Savernake, instead of Arden, had been Stratford's neighbor, so that it might be peopled with the poet's fancy. Its trees are worthy to be carved with Rosalind. Here old Adam might have burst upon a woodland feast. This is the glade where the tinkers played their Thisbe, and Titania danced in moonlight to the music of a cobweb in the wind.

There are oaks in Savernake that may have heard the Norman horn of William. This wood was the abode of Merlin; for story says that Marlborough was once called Merlebergh and that the enchanter's bones still lie below the castle mound. And the very motto of the town—*Tibi nunc sapientis ossa Merlini*—still accepts the legend.

Savernake served for Saxon sport. It became a royal preserve, and Norman and Plantagenet hunted here and put it under forest law. Its name does not occur in

Its trees are worthy to be carved with Rosalind

Domesday Book, but in 933 it appears in a deed of gift. By grant of King John, Thomas Sturmy became its warden with his seat at Wolf Hall, no more than two miles upon the south. Here Jane Seymour was born, and here she was married to Henry VIII. Their wedding feast was laid in a barn, and a part of its walls still stands. Edward Seymour was Jane's brother, and the forest was his playground before he became Somerset and Lord Protector. Near Savernake is a Roman camp. Many towns near bear Saxon names. Not far away is the site of a battle between Wessex and Mercia. These high woods, no matter whether history or romance is guide, are the abode of meditation.

It would be a jolly place to read Malory's Morte d' Arthur, or the Chronicles of Monmouth. Here Percy's Ballads would sound their best. The filtering light would cast a golden glow on Shakespeare. But of moderns, poets no less than Keats and Shelley should be tried; although in experiment I would be willing to hazard a page of Maurice Hewlett in his younger manner of the Forest Lovers, to learn whether his pen possess the touch of true antiquity. I was reading last night his published letters. He confesses the New Forest, but has no word of Savernake.

At this point, when I was roaming like Puck among the trees, Collins to his shame announced again that his tire was soft.

"Put your thumb against your head," I retorted, "and tell us which is softer."

"I rather think," was George's milder comment, "that if you had applied to the open valve the breath

you have wasted in complaint, the tire by now would be as tight as a Limehouse sailor."

Collins had squatted beside his wheel. "How do you fasten the pump on?" he asked.

And then, being a genius rather than a mechanic, he loosed the valve and the tire collapsed.

On our return to the Castle and Ball we were told that dinner would be served to us at nine o'clock at a second table after the college visitors had been fed. So we wandered in the village streets. It was two hours of Germanic concentration on an antique shop, a bookstall and a window of brier pipes.

The High Street is a broad thoroughfare with a church at each end. It is a fragment of the old Bath road, but the town's importance fell with the coming of the railroad to be now somewhat revived by motor travel. There was a castle once at Marlborough which was a favorite lodging of King John and Henry III, and one session at least of Parliament was held here. Annals are crowded with famous names until, late in the eighteenth century, the castle fell to ruin, and was repaired to be the Castle Inn. And now again this has been swept into the uses of the college.

Hutton's Wiltshire gives many pages to Marlborough, yet petty theft is dull and I spare myself the detail. It will suffice that Marlborough is a pleasant town of rather a modern air, despite Merlin and the Saxons. I have myself buried Merlin once or twice in the Welsh hills and I decline to dig him up and plant him here.

George rummaged as usual.

Swift the traveler passes by,
Timely, timely then be wise.
Readers so thy moments fly
Early seek the Heavenly Prize
Sarah Christiana Linford
1798 aged eight years

I bought a novel, The Castle Inn, by Stanley Weyman, with its plot laid here. "About a hundred and

Old lace and lorgnettes were picking at their mutton

thirty years ago," it starts, for it is that kind of story. For an hour we sat at a movie in which Hollywood instructs the world in the niceties of American home life.

By this time dinner was proceeding briskly in the coffeeroom of the hotel. Lads of shiny faces in round collars and blue jackets were sitting beside their fluffy sisters. Old lace and lorgnettes were picking at their mutton. Waiters were plunging from the kitchen. A torrent of sweets was coming down against an eddy of soiled crockery moving up, And early diners, now appeased, were flirting mildly on the stairs outside, while a rattle of young voices possessed the smoke room.

A box of hothouse grapes

"Now, sir," called the head waiter.

"Now, sir," echoed his underling.

We found among the crumbs upon the table a box of hothouse grapes, and we ate them quickly before the error could be discovered.

We had deposited our wheels at a shop for slight repairs, so we walked to Mrs. Spuggins'. But she was still working among soiled crockery, and it was the little girl who let us in.

We tossed up pennies for the possession of the tubercular bed, and to our bad luck it fell to George. He had no sheets, so he crawled between scratchy blankets.

Down the middle of the double bed I stretched that long bolster that the English love.

"Collins," I said, "if I kick, you may spit at me and call me dog."

As I fell to sleep I heard Collins prattling of his tire. But all night long, for fear of killing him, I lay as stiff as a board that feels a cramp And I dreamed that I was a petrified forest—root, stump, trunk and branch.

Travelers, I repeat, must be content.

Nodding in its carriage from the waters

CHAPTER XI

AVEBURY, WITH A CRABBED PARAGRAPH ON TOURISTS

You hear this fellow in the cellarage.

MOTHER SPUGGINS charged us for our cramped room, bare of sheets and towels but with strange breeches and unwiped soap, the usual price of an English inn; for college towns all around the world fatten their lean months upon a holiday. New Haven, which I know in my own experience, breeds harpies that claw the commencement feast. In no other instance was our lodging priced too high. Culture's handmaid was the only profiteer.

We had breakfast at the Castle and Ball, which was now being swabbed, and of an odor mingled with antiquity and soap. We left the town by the old Bath road. Time was when we would have met Vanity Fair, nodding in its carriage from the waters. But now such fashion as chooses Bath rumbles along the Great Western Railway to the north.

At West Kennett we inquired of a motor policeman the way to Silbury Hill and thence to Avebury. With the usual politeness of an English officer he wheeled about to show us.

And now, on consulting an ordnance map, we observed that we were in a center of prehistoric monuments. Not even near Stonehenge are Celtic remains so thick. Roundabout on the hills are many names which betray this fact—Sarsen Stones, the Temple, Long Barrow, Stone Circle, Earth Works, Three Barrows, Tumuli, Grey Weathers and Rybury Camp. It is a district where old gentlemen in long white beards dig for relics of the age of bronze; and if their picks pry loose a Roman's bones, they toss them aside as mere upstarts. We passed within a half mile of Grey Weathers, and its confusion of standing and fallen stones resembled a crowded cemetery in bad repair.

And now the motor officer chugged up an incline to the foot of Silbury Hill. Arrests are rare in this country of the dead, so he slid off his motor to keep us company.

Silbury Hill is an artificial cone of earth, one hundred and twenty-five feet high, and it covers five acres. It is said to be the tallest hill in Europe to be cast up by man. Its age is uncertain but, as it deflects the Roman

road, it must have been there when the road was built. There is a tradition that King Sil, whoever he may have been, "was buried here on horseback and that the hill was raysed while a posset of milke was seething." Housewives will know the credibility of this. Little is known as to its use. It is conjectured to have been a tomb, and a story persists that a man's bones and a horse's bridle of days before the Romans were dug from the top of the hill in 1723. Shafts of later exploration have found nothing. Except for its greater height and mass Silbury resembles a pile of ore fetched down from Lake Superior.

The view on top was worth the climb. To the north was the tower of Avebury church, to the southwest, Devizes with its wireless towers. To the east stretched the Roman road, and on the south were the hills of Wiltshire. These are mostly bare of trees, but here and there upon a summit they are gathered in groups as if huddling for a football signal. All about were barrows, that could be discovered by a map and a compass laid upon it.

Instructed in a short cut to Avebury, we lifted our wheels across a wire fence and struck up a path along the river Kennett which is here dwindled to a runnel in the fields. There were several wire fences, and a barb caught in George's breeches—in that dome above the transept that rises highest when he stoops.

"Hoy!" said George. "I feel a bee."

But we cut him loose.

We came presently to a highroad on the edge of town, and entered between standing monoliths.

The village of Avebury, now in lonely country, occupies the center of what was once a populous district. It is the focus of converging lines of hills, each of which saved travel from the marshes which balked man's ingenuity.

The village is now but the crossing of roads that loiter without an errand. There is an inn or two, a manor house, a scattering of cottages, a school, a church with Saxon remnant, and such small shops as rural housewives need. In coaching days the highway ran within a mile, but now the nearest travel save for the motor is beyond the sound of whistle.

Avebury sleeps in sunlight and dreams of Druids through the night. I had a card to mail; but for the stamp, I waited until the postmistress had returned with a joint from the butcher's. I peeked in the window of the school and saw a parsed sentence instructing an empty room. Nor had *Amo-amas*, still a duty under whip, acquired its touch of moonlight. Amo and Amas live together in felicity, but Amat is the villain who makes a triangle of love.

But if one wanders on the two streets that comprise the town, he will observe great standing stones of rough unhewn surface and others that are fallen. Upright stones mark the road out both north and south, and several more are lodged in gardens where they overtop one story cottages. A tourist will notice, also, that a mound encircles the village, with a trench cut on its inner side.

Yet so incurious were early travelers that none of them until recent times left any guess or hint of interest

as to Avebury's origin, in those diaries that were once the fashion. At most they praised a pleasant village where their journey had lodged them for the night. It was not until 1678 that a certain Doctor Toope had the curiosity to report "a vast number of human skeletons . . . skull touching skull, with the feet in the direction of the Temple." And only in 1723 were excavations made.

Nor is this long indifference to be specially wondered at, for the same stupor neglected all the antiquities of Europe. It was not until—but I forget the date—that the Temple of Pæstum stirred men's curiosity. These landmarks were taken for granted, and men no more asked an origin than of a mountain.

I suppose this old incurious world made no challenge of antiquity because in its essentials it was the same—a static world that had reached perfection and had stopped. It is the revolutions of today that bid us look backward to the past. For if change is a proper calendar, the world was ancient until the nineteenth century. Before that Pæstum was but an awkward style recently discarded, and it is not last year's custom that is treasured in museums. But modern industry, that swept away antiquity, makes it rare and highly valued. It is only in our own time that Mr. Cook set up his shop for cultured travel, and shrines became cluttered with tourists and popcorn booths.

Avebury sits on the ruin of a forgotten age. It is a parasite, for its streets and houses are built of Celtic stones. The walls even of its Christian church—Thou shalt not steal!—were pilfered from Druid worship.

Recent exploration has found red-deer antlers in the trench inside the mound, used probably as picks, and the shoulder blades of oxen employed as shovels. It has found, also, neolithic tools on the base of chalk when the silt was cleared away. Computation of their depth against an average rate of siltage through recorded years, together with the fashion of the stones, has placed them not later than two thousand years before the birth of Christ. And yet this trench is newer than the temple of monoliths it was built to inclose. This temple, not only in its size but in its antiquity, outrivals Stonehenge.

"Let's eat," said Collins.

"Presently," I answered.

The Temple was an irregular circle of six hundred and fifty stones placed upright at intervals of twenty-seven feet and inclosing about twenty-eight acres. Of these stones only thirty-one are left today, and sixteen of them are fallen to the ground.

"Acres don't mean much to me," observed Collins. "I wonder how big it really looked."

I continued.

There was no roof or any general shelter. Inside this major circle were two inner circles, one north and one south, an arrangement like a watch dial if it had two second hands moving on separate circles. A portal opened from the Great Temple to an avenue of stones that led to an oval a mile away on Overton Hill. And there was another portal on the north to a shorter avenue of upright stones that extended beyond the present church to still another circle for fire worship and

the burning of human sacrifice; for here charred earth and men's bones were found.

It is a present theory that Avebury was a temple of Baal—the same old gentleman with a square-cut beard to whom the Children of Israel once built a golden calf—that it was an older cousin to the Temple of Baalbek. These two shrines "represent the most magnificent examples of the earliest and of the latest culmination of the Baalic form of architecture." One of the inner circles of Avebury contained the obelisk of phallic suggestion, and the other was the shrine of Ashtoreth where three or four stones inclosed the adytum of her sensual worship. These discoveries are said to confirm other British exploration in proof that these islands shared the phallic observance of the continent as recorded in the temples of the East.

Scholars stress the converging hills and they affirm that each conveyed its pilgrim traffic to this center of British worship. But from what distance they came, in what numbers, whether afoot or on beast, or how they were lodged, lies outside all record. Railway folders and guidebooks dress Druids like Jewish prophets, but this must be pure invention. To people these lonely hills with the men of four thousand years ago, to set their clamor on the dusty paths and lodge them for the night—this is the task of fancy.

The airplane now plays its part in discovery. The exact position of the stones has been determined from the prospective of the sky. I have this on high authority, for the inn's proprietor heard it in the town's garage.

Every tourist goes to Stonehenge. It has won its place in school geographies and on steamship folders. Motorists mark it on their schedule. And Avebury is ignored. It is more remote, it is true—an extra map in the tonneau—and it stands neighbor to no cathedral city. But Avebury is mightier than Stonehenge—"a cathedral to a parish church"—older and of deeper historical suggestion. It is, furthermore, a pleasant village with two good inns; whereas Stonehenge stands barren on the plain.

It must be that tourists, when once their path is set, do not know how to change. Sheep have a hundred paths upon a hill, but Mr. Cook has one. Elephants marching tail in mouth to advertise a circus follow a route as predetermined. Savernake is lovelier than the New Forest, but it is not visited. Tamworth surpasses Kenilworth, but the crowd neglects it. Except for Sir Walter Scott, Kenilworth is dull, and there are a dozen castles that please the fancy more—Raglan, Harlech, Chepstow, Carnarvon, Conway, in Wales alone, without mention of the Scottish border.

Stonehenge has profited doubtfully by its advertising, but Avebury may be seen in comfort without a shilling ticket or any char-à-banc rubbing against the ribs. There is a barbed wire fence around Stonehenge but, being as wire fences are, one can look through it. Nor have I ever discovered why tourists will pay money to go within a wire inclosure, when the stones are seen to better advantage from the road without a fee. But there are persons who must put their finger on any sacred thing.

I intended at this point to speak sourly of the tourist. Have I not gone around Florence in a culture bus, and spent two days at Stratford? I have heard tourists lament the scarcity of pie and golden bantam corn. They have sniffed at plumbing and the size of locomotives. Like children they have practiced from a guide book which picture they should praise, and all was lost if the thumb slipped out of place.

But Collins was hungry, so we went to eat. And then with stomach fed, my pen grew soft and merciful.

It was a clean little hotel, with the largest tin bathtub I have ever seen. This, for England's glory, I balance against her tiny locomotives. It was filled by a pitcher from a well, and emptied with a sponge. Our Saturday at home hath no terror like a week-end here.

With a heavy appetite we fell upon our beef and mutton, and that lonely leaf of lettuce that the English call a salad.

Our road lay through Broad Hinton, where it struck northwest to the summit of a hill that overlooks the valley of the Thames. The charm of southern scene is a clear-cut line, but nature in the north rubs her thumb on hills that are hardly dry. Lost in the misty meadows lay the Thames. We shall cross it at Ashton Keynes where it flows in a trickle near the source.

We coasted to Broad Town, and so to Wootton Bassett. Here we stopped for beer. A friendly group sat around the pub. In America we run for office, and the English stand. We stand for drink, and they sit. Their pubs have chairs. Ours have but a counter and a rail, for we are energetic even at our soda water.

George treated the crowd. And then, when we were acquainted, there was general talk.

George told them of our trip from Southampton, that Scotland was our objective, that he was looking for samplers—at which there was a laugh. He informed them that we washed our linen at night, and that Collins resembled Adam in his purer days. He showed them a dollar bill, and the conversation turned to Canada and emigration—for this is the English artisan's desire. The industrial slough is always in his thoughts and he sobers in discussion.

As my memory casts back upon the trip, it is these half hours with laborers and small merchants in the pubs that stand in brightest color. It was not the liquor, for mine was usually ginger beer. But a traveler's best ticket to the knowledge of a people is an offered drink, and he is repaid in friendly gossip of things that a guidebook cannot tell him. If our embassies might wander on the road, a few of our wars would be averted.

It was tea time when we came to Ashton Keynes. The beardless Thames, now but a stripling from the Cotswolds, flows through this village, and there are little bridges to the houses across the high street. It is pleasant to hear it bearing from the hills songs that the plain shall never know.

For tea we were directed around the corner to the Horse and Jockey. But the fire was out, and there was no hot refreshment. George had read on a placard that today the public was invited to a cricket match and fête in the garden of the manor house, and he was

eager to attend. But Collins and I were ashamed of our shabby clothes.

There is a charm in Ashton Keynes, with its street along the infant Thames. It is a village where one might write the stubborn chapters of a book, or jot down verses in the moonlight. Hereabouts, on the border of the Cotswolds, there are many villages that might serve this purpose.

Presently it rained. We put on our rubber coats, and rode rapidly to the Fleece Hotel in Cirencester.

South porch of parish church at Cirencester

CHAPTER XII

ANOTHER VILE CHAPTER IN THE RAIN

Clouds and eclipses stain both moon and sun.

CIRENCESTER is a prosperous little city of stone houses on the Cotswold's southern edge. It is really in the valley of the Thames whose source is near, yet Cirencester feels the brisker air of hills. In the center of the city the high street widens to a market place and here stands the church and our hotel.

The city is of Roman origin but, despite its name, it seems to have been a market rather than a camp. It was, however, walled about and a fragment of this is

left. Near-by are certain grass mounds called the Querns and these were probably a Roman cemetery. In the open fields are the slight markings of an amphitheater. There is, also, The Corinium Museum of Roman discoveries. We missed all these sights, for only a web-foot tourist could have found them.

Cirencester appears vividly in later history when it was a wool market, and English looms still found their raw supplies at home. In those days there was an abbey of Augustinian canons to the north of the present church, but Henry VIII ordered its destruction, and its stones are scattered in buildings through the city. In the Civil Wars, Cirencester leaned toward parliament, and in consequence it was attacked by Prince Rupert.

On the city's western edge is Cirencester Park which the Bathursts have owned since the end of the seventeenth century. A famous Lord Bathurst found a place in the lives of Congreve, Steele, Pope, Swift, Gay and Prior, and all of these worthies visited Cirencester and cracked their bottles. Lord Bathurst was a proper host in those days of heavy drinking and at eighty-five he had "all the wit and promptness of a man of thirty." He lived to see his son the Lord Chancellor of England and in his eighty-third year he could out-drink him. "Come, my good friends," it is recorded, "since the old gentleman is gone to bed, I think we may venture to crack another bottle."

Yet such sturdy age is common in England. Palmerston was still premier at eighty, and Gladstone at eighty-four. No other nation seems to have used to such extremes its brilliant youth and age, for Pitt was

premier at twenty-four and Palmerston secretary of war against Napoleon at twenty-five. Old Bathurst may still be living—drinking his great-great-grandchild up to bed.

"I am with Lord Bathurst, at my bower," writes Pope. " . . . It is the place that of all others I fancy; and I am not yet out of humor with it, though I have had it some months: it does not cease to be agreeable to me so late in the season; the very dying of the leaves adds a variety of colours that is not unpleasant . . . I write an hour or two every morning, then ride out a hunting upon the Downs, eat heartily, talk tender sentiments with Lord B., or draw plans for houses and gardens, open avenues, cut glades, plant firs, contrive waterworks, all very fine and beautiful in our own imagination. At night we play at commerce, and play pretty high. . . . "

How faintly he praises the color of autumn leaves—a variety "that is not unpleasant." Pope and all these wits were at their best in London. As for Swift, I must read the letters that he wrote to Stella to learn whether they mention Oakley Park. All of these men were sycophants to gain a patron, and they threw their wit against his enemy for a pension and an easy holiday. I have called it a static world, but there were struggles for a social footing and a livelihood.

You may pronounce Cirencester as you please. You may omit the third, fourth and fifth letter, or these and the eighth as well. You may make the "i" short or long. You may laboriously sound each letter. But no matter how you pronounce it, you will be corrected.

I said "Siseter," and it sounded as if my teeth were chattering. The landlord added a few letters and set me right. But I would have preferred a taproom fire.

I took a hot bath before dinner, then went to bed for warmth—piling my luggage (boots and bag, pants and coat, even the wet towel) upon the coverlet in the hope that all of these would remind me of a German pillow. It was Job who was sent a comforter, but he never lodged in Cirencester. I lay shivering, wondering whether boils were worse, then decided that it was a manlier thing to die upon my feet. So I dressed.

By a pitying error of the barmaid a brisk fire burned in the tap; and there I found George huddled close, stirring something hot around a lemon.

The maid looked down from the bar of heaven.

"*Même chose*," I murmured.

"*Même chose*," echoed Collins.

The wind, also, had a *même chose* in mind; for it rattled the taproom windows, then galloped around the building trying all the doors; yet the drink of England's wind is water.

Three golden sips of lemon, and I noted in my journal that the crisis had been passed.

"*Un autre?*" asked George.

"A couple of *autres*," answered Collins.

And rosy thought now raced upon the storm.

After dinner we shivered in a movie, saw the moon quite blurred in mist, and climbed the stairs to bed. If there had been a carpet, we would have matched and made a blanket out of it. The last tourist must have pried it up and stuffed it in his bag.

Sunday broke with heavy rain.

If there had been sunlight on that gloomy Sabbath I could now discourse on the ruins of the Roman wall. In an interval of better weather we did visit the church. We walked, also, to a railway bridge and followed with our eyes a native's finger who announced some precious remnants in a meadow. It seemed rather a humpy bit of land, but we saw nothing that hinted of Julius Cæsar. It was a pleasanter thing to look down upon the lines of tracks and hope for trains. If ever I have a wooden leg I shall become a watchman with a red flag, and stand at attention as the engines pass.

We tried to gain entrance to Oakley Park but, while we waited for the gates to open, a gust of rain drove us back to the hotel. Through the grill we had seen a long avenue of trees, but Pope's bower was lost in storm.

And now it settled to a steady downpour. Even Collins could find no comfort in the sky. As often as we went to the door, a wet wind sent us back to shelter. Nor was there a fire now in the tap. The little table in the corner was desolate, and stale rims of liquid saddened us with the thought of happier times. At George's hint for a fire, the barmaid shook her head. It was against the Magna Carta.

But presently her face lighted. She would start a gas fire in the writing room.

It proved to be a small apartment, cluttered with desks, a sofa, one easy chair, and another not so easy. It was a room in which a traveling salesman might write a despondent report on business and then cut his throat. A rubber tube descended from a gas jet and the

spout of it pointed significantly at a small rectangle of asbestos within the fireplace. And it hinted the means of an easier death. A window looked out upon the inn yard and against the kitchen windows where two girls were cleaning breakfast dishes. I envied them, paddling in the hot suds.

The barmaid now applied a match to the asbestos. But nothing of importance happened—a point of blue only, where the gas issued from the tube. It was but a feeble little brother of that element which the Druids worshiped. The girl, however, seemed delighted with the display. I have seen the same look on landlords when they show you a gloomy window to an alley.

"There," she said, "just give it a few minutes and the room will be as warm as toast." And from what I have perceived of English toast, I know that she was right.

We gathered on all fours inside the hearth rail to await the big event. Presently a wisp of asbestos turned a faded pink and wiggled slightly.

"Hooray," said Collins, "she's off."

Let me record that in all the weeks we spent that morning in the writing room never did the entire asbestos ignite. At most an inch or so wavered into light. If the despondent salesman had taken the rubber in his teeth, the whiff could not have made him drowsy.

It would be unfair to say that no heat issued. There was a perceptible warmth if one put his palm flatly on the asbestos. But it was as stingy as Old Scrooge and had nothing to give away. The hearth rail ran around the fire at a distance of eighteen inches, and on this we sat with knees forward and up. A susceptible marsh-

mallow might have turned brown; but our hinterland froze blue.

There is nothing of the fire-worshiping Druid in the present Englishman. He dreads fire. He lights it by the calendar and not by necessity, for he feels no necessity. He is happiest when a wet wind blows down his

Our hinterland froze blue

neck. It is then that he builds a fire of Scotch combustibles inside his stomach, and this is his only central heating. If there were prohibition in England—but the thought is unthinkable. The Empire would turn to goose pimples and perish from the earth.

And now I report the lagging hours to noon. In the inn yard the rain beat an incessant patter, with now and then a swirl against the window as if to drown the pink

asbestos. Across the yard was a disordered range of roofs in many levels, and little drain pipes dropped water which scurried on the sloping slate to look for other drains. Kitchen smoke was torn from its chimney pot. A weather vane went mad. The sky was lead.

George took to post cards and his widows, but this polygamous romance failed to warm his fingers. So he changed to the clammy leather couch.

"This," and he tapped the leather, "is the coldest spot in England. I might be sitting on a cake of ice."

"Then why sit there?" I asked.

"I was in hopes," he answered, "that in time I might warm it."

He curled up, so that his legs might be a comfort to his chest.

Collins, after he had memorized the guidebook on the sights we were not to see, opened up a shabby periodical that retails the news of fashion.

"King Edward," he read, "has gone to Scotland for grouse."

"He's dead," said George.

"I can't help that," answered Collins. "He's gone for grouse. Here's his picture."

"It's a paper of before the war," said George.

Presently Collins launched into Marlowe's Faustus. He strode among the desks. "Was this the face," he bellowed, "that launched a thousand ships?"

"It's the day," George answered. "You could launch them anywhere."

Collins, like all actors, needs an audience. His eye

had caught the girls in the kitchen opposite who swabbed the dishes. So he stood against the window.

"Sweet Helen," he cried, with appropriate gesture, "make me immortal with a kiss."

There was no response from the sink, except a giggle.

"Her lips suck forth my soul;" cried Collins. "See where it flies!—

> "Come, Helen, come, give me my soul again.
> Here will I dwell, for Heaven is in these lips,
> And all is dross that is not Helena."

His voice arose above the patter of the storm, but I think the girls missed some of his impassioned speech through the double windows. At least, however, they were eager for his message, for their noses came flat against the glass. It was this that killed romance, for no lady looks her best with a flat nose. Paris or Faustus, either of them, must have been chilled toward Helen in such circumstance.

Collins, therefore, took up a candlestick and paraded around the room in the manner of Lady Macbeth walking in her sleep. "Yet who would have thought," he cried, "the old man to have had so much blood in him?" Having given an imitation of Siddons, he played it as Mary Pickford, then tried it as a negress, and finally in the manner of Italian opera. Again his eye sought the window for an audience, but the twins were gone on other business.

George worked on his post cards, and I shall be amazed if any buyer of old glass is omitted. The rain pattered on the stones. The asbestos twinkled with

blue flame. "*O lente, lente,*" shouted Collins, "*currite noctis equi!*" The steeds of a rainy morning run more slowly than the horses of the night; yet the hours wore on toward noon.

And now at last a patch of blue for a sailor's breeches showed above the kitchen roof. We rushed to the coal shed. We seized our bicycles. Helen was forgotten in a burst of sunlight.

We pedaled off.

Tattered garments cast from the journey of the wind

CHAPTER XIII

TO BIBURY, WHERE THE AUTHOR PLANS A SCHOOL

And still the wonder grew
That one small head could carry all he knew.

FROM Cirencester our road slipped into the Cotswolds, yet without the trumpeting of any hill. Nor could we say at any point precisely that we had entered them, for there was little change from the rolling country farther south. I had looked for sudden stone roofs stained with moss, yet all was gradual. For neither man nor nature leaps.

Clouds lay in the shallow pockets of the hills, quite out of breath. Or were they tattered garments cast

from the journey of the wind? It was Collins who remarked this, for a shirt of his own had been left in Cirencester because its cuffs were torn. The storm had hung its clouds upon these sunny hills to dry.

Leaving presently the Roman road called Akeman Street, we struck north through Barnsley, and in a few miles of pleasant travel came to Bibury.

This is a charming village on the river Coln, which here brawls downward in a narrow valley to the upper waters of the Thames. The village is but a single street, flanked on one side by stone cottages and shops, and by the stream upon the other, with here and there a bridge. These bridges were doubtless designed for travel, yet Bibury's swiftest traffic has no errand and it leans its idle elbows on the rail. For where nimble waters wink and a runnel sings to shallow stones, even busyness must pause.

In 1871 William Morris came to live near-by at Kelmscott, and he has written that Bibury is the loveliest village of England. And yet this adjective is trite when employed upon a valley that drips so freshly in the sun, that sings such madrigals of running water, that smells so sweet of earth and trees. If William Morris had coasted with us down the hill and paused upon our bridge, he would have contrived a livelier phrase to fit these ancient roofs and their fringe of wooded hills. He was inventing a new wall paper, and did not put his whole mind upon his speech.

The Swan Inn is an excellent hotel, if one may judge who has not sunk a tooth within its mutton. The Coln is famous for trout that lie with wary nose upstream,

Bibury's swiftest traffic has no errand

and in its valley are many villages lost in its pretty turnings. And Bibury must be the center for charming walks. I fancy that Oxford students come here to read in the long vacation.

Yet Americans never linger and few of them have even heard its name. Somewhere hereabouts must be the course of their swift journey through the Cotswolds from Gloucester east, but Bibury is off the thread and a detour takes time. And it is likely that it is too quiet for tourists. It could support their curiosity no further than a brief walk, with perhaps a minute on the bridge. If mischance broke their motor here, they would bite their finger nails and fret their chauffeur for a start. Our hurried travel is but the symbol of our lives. I wonder . . .

I wonder if Bibury could serve in a better curriculum of life. Collins and George had gone puttering about the town, so I sat upon the bridge to consider this.

Our education applies itself to the lessons that fit us to maturity, and theories are hawked among the schoolmen how this may be accomplished—the range of studies, option or requirement, whim or rule, the classics or vocation. Yet always the discussion confines itself to youth, and how it may study for maturity. One would think that there was a golden portal at the end of college, and that if one be unplucked by failure, a perfect life outside lies ready—that nothing more need be done about it.

It is here, as I sit on the bridge at Bibury, that I find the flaw of education; for nothing is planned how maturity shall prepare for age—how the third and fourth

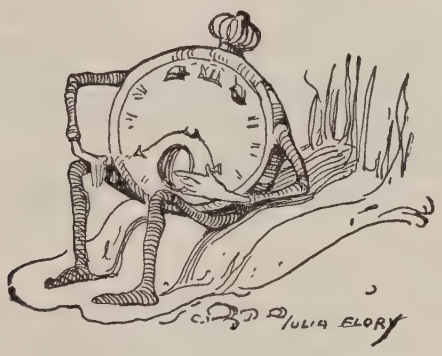
decades shall fit themselves to be the seventh and the eighth. There is at most a hint that industry is needed, but how it shall be directed, except in penny picking, is left to chance. So, when a livelihood is gained, the years are empty. Adults play bridge each night, run to the movies, consume trivial books. They spend themselves on cosmetics and babble, on the market and golf alone, until I wonder how they can chide a child who wastes his time—how they can send him to his studies unashamed. If men would apply to the affairs of heart and mind some of the industry that they give to wealth, if women would deepen a shallow culture and rear their children, life would not fall to a final slough. It would come prepared to the chair beside the hearth and the graver hours of twilight.

Our fretfulness has no time for leisure, and for that meditation that feeds the heart. We sit on so many committees that there is not a minute left to study the problem, for when the clock shall strike there is another meeting. Day by day is clutter. We build an organization, when it is a man's lonely thought that would find the answer. We are too busy for contentment, and we grow old without wisdom. We depend on things outside ourselves, and our minds are rusty.

It is to meet this situation that I offer Bibury. All the details are not arranged—for a man upon a bridge lacks time—but there will be no learned chairs or any ritual of lessons. I propose merely to drop into the town a few fretful persons of middle age in order that they may learn to live without committees. In the cloister of this secluded valley they will be deprived of

triviality and busyness. In their freshman week they will learn their mental poverty, for a bored hour will take our lowest mark.

But when a student can hear throughout a month the poetry of this hillside stream, when his eye finds a continuing beauty in the clouds, when his thought prefers this quieter life to the roar of cities—then will he be offered the diploma of his maturity. And he will depart



A bored hour will take our lowest mark

confident that he is prepared to meet the years when the stouter pleasures of the world shall be denied.

A cane and rod, strong boots and a flannel shirt, a trusty book and hours without a clock—these are our requirements. An hour of sunlight, an hour of rain, a hilltop for a morning tramp, stream, wind and moving shadow, and then the night with its talk about the fire—these are our curriculum.

Presently George and Collins returned.

"We saw rather a jolly little church," said George. "And we were told that there used to be an hourglass in the pulpit. The old fellow talked until the sand

ran out and then, reversing the glass, he informed his congregation that he would speak another hour."

"I don't see how they could sit so long," said Collins. "I'd get the fidgets."

"What else did you see?" I asked.

"There really isn't much," said George.

"How would you like it for a month?"

"I'd die of fret," said Collins. "Do you think that you could stand it?"

"My dear fellow," I answered slowly, as in deep reflection. "I'd be biting my finger nails before night."

We slid off the railing of the bridge.

"Where now?" asked Collins.

"To the roar of cities," was my reply, "for I have flunked."

But I gave no explanation.

Bibury must remain indelible in pleasant recollection. As for the school, the project falters.

Whose towers rise above quiet gardens

CHAPTER XIV

WE MEET A SULLEN WIDOW ON THE ROAD

Why didst thou promise such a beauteous day,
And make me travel forth without my cloak?

AND now the sailor's patch of blue was stitched in stormy clouds. I prefer the sky a ragamuffin that is out at elbow. Hardly had we climbed the hill that mounts above the town when a gust of wind fetched a downpour. George scurried to a barn among the coobas. Collins and I crawled behind the doubtful shelter of a meadow wall where we squatted in tall

wet grass to await the curtain of gray water that came sweeping down the valley.

And the rain spent itself and we gathered in consultation.

"It still looks threatening," said George. "We might put up at the Swan Hotel."

But Collins struck the posture of Columbus and pointed to the west.

Ablington was next, Coln Rogers and Coln St. Dennis. These villages lie pleasantly in the valley, and all of them would provide the test for entrance to old age—villages of peaceful churches whose towers rise above quiet gardens and winding lanes. They are the stuff from which a poet might make a Sunday hymn, and one is not surprised to learn that Keble was once curate hereabouts.

Even in a squall something of a Sabbath afternoon dwells upon the Coln, and the highroad is so uncertain which side of the stream offers the prettier view that it crosses at each bridge. It trots beside the water like a dog that goes walking with its master, making every now and then a little excursion of its own to sniff the trees along the hill.

At Coln St. Dennis the heavens spilled again, and we took refuge on a cottage porch that jutted to the road.

Presently the door was opened stingily three inches and a long thin section of a withered face appeared. George is quick to suspect a widow, and he stood at attention with lifted hat.

"May we shelter ourselves here?" he asked with a shattering smile.

In America his tone would have melted any heart bereaved. But never have I heard him so put down by weeds. A cold stare searched him from head to foot.

"Yes, if ye want to," came the pickled answer, and the door was slammed against his nose.

"I was hoping," said George, and his eye was filmed with disappointment, "that she would invite us in for tea—off the blue china."

"Perhaps she wasn't a widow," suggested Collins.

"Collins," answered George, "you are nature's sweet restorer. You are right, of course."

Something of Keble had left the valley as we pushed our bicycles up hill.

Beyond Coln St. Dennis we came upon the Fosse Way, which is a Roman road and is still the Cotswold highway to the north.

A Roman road is always straight, for it was built not for local needs but by a central authority to hold a conquest. It moves with an air of purpose as if it had the business of the empire on its mind, and one still hears the march of phantom legions. A Saxon road wanders as if on holiday, and it seeks a village around a hill and loiters by a stream. For Saxon life was of smaller units, and its roads of shorter errand. One may know by the manner of his road through what civilization he is traveling.

George had not yet shaken off his gloom. "I'd like to send that lady," he muttered, "Keble's Christian Year. The sharp old fang needs it."

At an inn at Fosse Bridge we sat for refreshment.

This inn is famous and it was our plan to pass the night. But somewhere hereabouts there was a cricket match and the rooms were engaged for the players. So we merely sat for tea and slap cake—a confection delightfully stuffed with spice and sugar. George had discovered a table of interesting design. He was on inverted fours beneath it, looking for the maker's name, when the slap cake entered with a swish of skirts. George slid out unashamed.

"It is a fine specimen of early Georgian," he explained, wherewith he cut himself a broad slice of the cake.

"Three shillings," said the skirt.

George fixed his eye upon her. "You don't suppose," he said, "that cots could be arranged for us in the wood shed."

She shook her head.

"Or perhaps a few of those cricket players will be struck by a bouncing ball and killed. In that case we could take their rooms. God's mercy moves in wondrous ways."

Again she shook her head.

"Two of us are old, and one grows fat," he persisted. "And both of us, I exclude the pint pot, are too feeble to be cast upon the storm. You may recall the mischief it did to Lear."

"But the sun is shining," urged the waitress.

"Ah, yes, but only for a moment. It will rain again presently. And then our cold bodies will be washed up on the shore."

But still she shook her head.

"May I suggest that you put three pillows at even spaces along the bar?"

"Sorry," said the waitress.

"A bolster on three chairs? I seem to remember that a hero in one of Goldsmith's plays once passed a night on such a bed."

"Some more tea?" asked the waitress.

"Ah," said George, "I see that you have a soft heart, and that you would help us if you could. Perhaps you have a billiard table which would make a jolly bed for three."

"Sorry," she repeated.

"Does it strike you," George persisted, "that your monotony of speech is in contrast to my variety?"

"Sorry."

"How far is it to the next inn?" I asked.

"More 'n seven miles."

"Saint Veronica," cried George. "But level, let us hope."

"It's mostly hills," she answered. And, seizing the tray of cups, she was gone.

"Forward, then!" said George. "*En avant, mes enfants!*" And with the gesture of a French poster, he took his wheel.

The battalions of the storm had now been swept aside, and in sunlight we traveled on a high upland which descended sharply to each stream. At the top of a slope Collins and I dismounted to wait for George. Presently he came puffing up on foot and reported that on the decline across the valley he had missed a cow by the merest frisking of her tail. He had fallen off, of

course, and had scraped along the stones, but thought no important bones were broken. He dropped his wheel and sank to the grass beside us.

"Perhaps, after all, Veronica was right," he murmured.

"How?" asked Collins.

"When I told her that I intended to cycle from the bottom to the top of England, the impertinent creature said I was too old."

George struck the edge of his palm below his knee. "Look," he said, "it no longer bounces. The great darkness is approaching."

Then he wiped his forehead, and pointed to the meadows.

"See those sheep," he exclaimed. "They may stay in that field all day. And it's level."

"But at least it is lovely country," I urged.

George groaned, and rolled forward on his face.

It was when afternoon was wearing toward supper that we pitched from hills to the village of Bourton-on-the-Water, a half mile down a crossroad. This village, also, like so many of the Cotswolds, stretches along a stream, with bridges here and there. The New Inn Hotel was the redundant name of our lodging for the night.

"Such a day and such a crinkled world," said George. "Here let me die." And he lifted down his broken legs.

We were given comfortable rooms, with family portraits in chalk for George to look at. On my dresser was a file of abandoned novels, if I may use the adjective in its bereaved rather than its moral sense.

George was already fast asleep.

I sang in my bath, for there was no lock upon the door.

Bourton's high street runs beside the Windrush and widens to a market place, flanked on one side by houses that look upon the stream. And there is a nest of side streets with pretty cottages in gardens. It is a bit more than a village, without the vices of a town. One feels that persons of good taste live here in easy circumstance—that days are sorted up from active outdoor hours and evenings by the fire, that tea is poured in china cups and that the latest books come up from London. Just now, at supper time, the smoke of Bourton chimneys lingered regretfully from the comfort of the hearth.

Presently, rousing George, we found a path that ran out of town along the stream. Meadow grasses trailed upon the water, as a lady of an older fashion once dragged her skirt. This is the Windrush and, although scholars assert the name arose from Saxon Wenris, an ignorant tourist will prefer its present suggestive spelling. It flows not like a rush of wind, yet a breeze was in the saddle and spurred it gently to a trot.

The English love their streams. Greater rivers may run for dirty profit from the cities, yet the runnels of the countryside are unspoiled by gain. The English stream, unlike ours in crowded districts, is never an open sewer or a dump for cans and ashes. It does not, like its western cousin, run to town of a Saturday night to be soiled in rougher life.

Even if the shallow water merely clears the stones,

each house will have its boat and landing, each garden will dip for a cooling drink. On summer afternoons you will hear quiet voices and the drip of water from an oar. You will see a lazy fellow with a rod and a hope deferred. I like to think that men from the universities drift upon these waters in the long vacation with their books, to find philosophy the sweetest when met in the

To find philosophy the sweetest when met in the shadow of a garden end

shadow of a garden end. Nor can one know the deeper rhythms of English prose and verse until he has heard them against the quiet obligato of the Severn or the Avon, the upper Thames or Wye. English songs have not their full meaning to the heart unless one knows these streams, these woods and hills, the village garden behind its wall, and the patter of a runnel on the stones. Only then may one realize that Elizabethan rhymes and melody are as native to the scene as the flowers upon a hedge and the deep rich meadow grass.

Nor is civilization in flower until rivers are a means of pleasure.

I am told that a shallow boat, with but a lift and carry now and then, may travel in a circuit of several hundred miles by employing canals from one riverhead to another—the Thames, the Avon and, as I recall, the Severn—and it journeys mostly downstream. In The Geographic lately there was an article on how this circuit might be made. Stevenson went to Holland for his inland journey, but I offer his neglected rivers near at home.

Presently we left the path by the Windrush, and so through trim streets of cottages until a foot bridge above a ford fetched us back to our hotel.

Mutton, boiled potatoes and a tart was supper—the wreckage of a tart, for one always gets broken bits of crust that are crumbled in the sauce.

We spent the evening in the tap. It was a long snug room of low ceiling, with the usual brass beerpulls on the bar and a row of spirits on the shelf. It is women who serve in these country bars, nor have I heard them receive more or less than civility. Theirs is the daintier touch upon the glass and pewter, and often their presence cools an anecdote and jest. There was a wag with us but, although I had hoped to remember a few of his sharp jibes, the last of them has gone. Boswell must have sucked his pencil now and then with a vacancy that matches mine. I recall only that my mug was marked "Teacher's," but when I punned upon it, I learned it was a liquor maker's name.

"Ten minutes," said the barmaid.

"The same," answered the wag.

"Me, too," said George.

At the closing hour Collins and I walked far down the road under the twinkling stars.

When at last my bedroom lights were out, I stood for a minute at the window to listen to the soft running of the Windrush through the meadows.

A mountain is of easy manufacture to a pen

CHAPTER XV

A WARNING AGAINST BELIEVING WHAT YOU READ

Little fishes talk like whales.

STOW-ON-THE-WOLD, a few miles north of Bourton-on-the-Water (and how these names delight the tongue!), sits on a hilltop of the Cotswolds, and up we trudged next morning beside our wheels. An Englishman would describe the town as on a wind-swept eminence. It is high, of course, as height is measured here—three hundred feet above the surrounding country. But English writers, who must cross the Channel to see a mountain, employ adjectives too large upon their native hills.

Years ago, before I started on a trip through Wales, I read George Borrow, and all across the country I looked vainly for the austere mountains he had de-

scribed. It was Johnson who made his little fishes talk like whales, and Borrow's Snowdon had cried out with the voice of the Bernese Oberland. And I once took an Englishman's excited page for a guide among the hill towns of Italy. As my train rolled south I scanned the higher peaks for a sight of Perugia lost among the clouds, to be disappointed when I found it far below the sky line. Perugia's magic does not require delirium. A mountain is of easy manufacture to a pen, and an upward stroke will build a Jungfrau. But if a man shall employ his tallest sentence on the Cotswolds, how shall he contrive a paragraph that ascends the Alps?

Nor is an Englishman's pen to be entirely trusted with sunlight or the blue of sky and sea. We Americans are usually disappointed in our first view of the Mediterranean, and this is because our expectation has been taught by British writers. It is blue, of course, but of no deeper shade than is found in our own waters of the South that are the mirror of an azure sky. The fact is, that an Englishman has lived so entirely inside a tent of clouds where sunlight is but a brief and accidental ripping of the canvas, that his pen runs crazy when the skies are swept. And is not the ocean your true chameleon—lead beneath the muffled heavens—and azure in the sun?

And now I am a skeptic also as to the comfort of an English inn, despite the poet's phrase—shall I not take mine ease?—for I am not sure that a foggy Englishman bred in rain knows the word's meaning. And if, after that trip to Cirencester, I shall read of stormy weather linked to a cozy snugness of a public tap, I

shall look to see if the fire is lighted. If this be omitted, I shall know that I would shiver in the hero's part.

As to food, how shall a man reared on cold mutton and colder toast bring conviction to his description of a banquet? I am quite unseated as to Dickens and England's other gustatory novelists.

No Latin convinces me by his assertion of energy and work; for he has himself slept since noon, and labor means the lifting of a finger. I am skeptic when a German speaks of a lady's beauty, and I conjure up a dumpling. If an American book be proclaimed as humor, I prepare for horseplay. In short, there is no absolute; and writers must be weighed in their circumstance before we may know the value of their word.

Be these things as they may, it is a stiff climb to Stow-on-the-Wold (one hundred and ninety pounds, cigarettes and a sedentary life), and I fancy that on windy nights its stone buildings dig in their toes to keep their footing.

On our arrival, however, the village dozed in sunlight. For it was the kind of morning when cats sleep on door sills and wink at unmolested birds, when dogs lie stretched in the road, when housewives work at open windows, and men don't work at all but lean their chins upon their canes and seem to think. These high towns, as they are the first to feel a storm, are also the nearest neighbors to a sunny Latin sky; and on a calm day they are content with meditation.

In former years a great fair was held in Stow that was called the Mop. It was so famous roundabout that a

Cotswold man, emigrating to Australia, gave his age to the authorities as "thirty, last Stow fair, sir," and was amazed that its day of opening had not spread around the world. There are stocks in the square at Stow, but these are rusty. There are houses of pretentious front that seem once to have sheltered fashion. In short, Stow, formerly of wealth and importance because of sheep, possesses beauty as its only legacy.

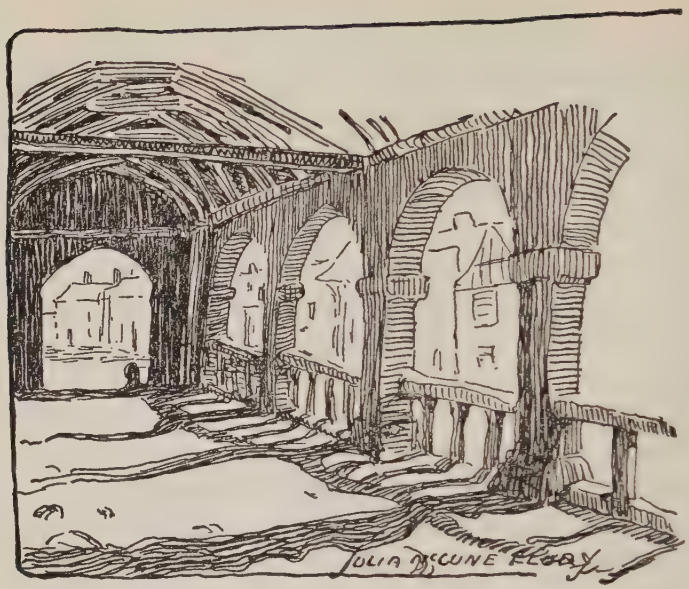
From the center of the town a road runs to the east, and this after many turns climbs the slope of Edgehill where Roundhead and Royalist first met in battle. And beyond is Great Tew where Falkland lived and studied Greek. So wide was his learning that his house became a resort for scholars from Oxford, twenty miles to the south. It was Lord Clarendon who wrote that "his house was a university in a lesser volume."

England itself is a world in lesser volume, and a swift perusal must be shallow. Our hurried journey can but skim a paragraph that lies open, to neglect with uncut leaf many equal chapters where the page is turned. Bath has been offered us wherever roads struck west, and Gloucester, Cheltenham and Evesham. An enticing wooden finger has seemed to beckon us to Malmesbury to inspect its ruined abbey—to sit as I did once through the June twilight on its roof, with a sexton to be my cheerful mentor. Here at Stow we are teased by Chipping Norton on the east, by Compton Wynyates and by Edgehill. The very names of these Cotswold towns stir a truant curiosity—Moreton-in-the-Marsh, Daylesford where Warren Hastings lived, Wychwood for its hint of superstition, and Idlecote which seems a cottage for

holidays and leisure. I would wish to visit Barton-on-the-Heath to see where Christopher Sly once lived, Upper Slaughter to learn how a lovely village can persist with such a name, Dover's Hill where games were played to cheat the Puritans "till the rascally Rebellion was begun by the Presbyterians." We wander, as it were, before the signboards of a hundred booths, and each crossroad is the hawker to a sight denied.

And I would stop in smaller towns unknown. For I have just been reading Drinkwater's Cotswold Characters. I would wish to meet Simon Rod the fisherman, and Rufus Clay the foreigner who came from near-by Pinswick. We cannot know how narrowly these villages still live and how ignorant they are of all the world beyond their valley, how distrustfully they look on those newly come among them, until we read of this man who shifted his home by a dozen miles and was thereafter all his life a stranger in a foreign land.

We did no more than pause at Stow-on-the-Wold, then struck northwest. It was hard on noon when we descended from lofty hills to Chipping Campden.



The wool market . . . now empty of its merchants

CHAPTER XVI

CHIPPING CAMPDEN, AND OF THIS AND THAT

More matter, with less art.

WHEREVER in England you find the word chipping, you will find an ancient market town; for *chip* is another form of cheap, and cheap was the language of advertisement as it is today. It is as though the town cried out, "Here are bargains!" London had its Eastcheap and its Cheapside. A variant is *chep*, which persists in Chepstow. In England a chapman, from this same cheap, is a commercial traveler. Chaffer, with identical root, is a word of bargaining, and swap is a bargain's cousin. Cope is

equivalent, as it appears in Copenhagen—a market harbor. Staple is such another word. A staple is a post, and posts were chiefly used to mark three things—a harbor opening, a safe passage of a ford, and a market. It is this third use that has come to us in staple products. Whitstable was a white post to guide shipping to the river mouth. Dunstable was a market on the downs, and there are many Staplefords on shallow streams. Isaac Taylor's Words and Places is a handy book to consult on an English journey.

Chipping Campden was a market for wool for six centuries following the Norman Conquest. During this time Flanders was the loom of Europe, and as early as the beginning of the twelfth century its merchants crossed to England for their raw supply.

When Edward III was king, there was an attempt to make cloth in England as a major industry. Flemish artisans were introduced. This led to the decline of Campden, for it was deficient in water power to run the looms, and Gloucestershire with both sheep and water pulled ahead. This new manufacture was so prosperous in the time of Elizabeth that Parliament forbade the export of wool, and this was a blow to Campden.

These Flemings of Shakespeare's day must have been melancholy fellows. There is a touch of bile in anyone who works in cloth; and the tailor, cross-legged on his bench, is always a sullen fellow. "Shall we rouse the night-owl in a catch," cries Toby Belch, "that will draw three souls out of one weaver?" And they were Puritans. "I would I were a weaver;" says Falstaff, "I could sing psalms." In the Puritans Shakespeare saw

a foe of his work and theater. It was they who passed laws against his players, and his Measure for Measure was his cry against them. To the poet of the Bankside these Flemish weavers with their psalms and melancholy were a part of the coming catastrophe that was to destroy the stage. It whets our interest in these Cotswold hills and in the Campden market.

In the eighteenth century Campden was saved from complete decay by the growth of the ribbon trade. And this, too, fell from prosperity, and it seemed that Campden must dwindle to the merest village.

But in the year 1902 the Guild of Handicraft migrated from London and purchased an old silk mill for their shops. They were men who had been under the influence of Morris and Ruskin—metalsmiths, jewelers, enamelers, wood carvers, cabinetmakers, printers and bookbinders. And with this industry Campden for a third time is rising into prominence. A waning population has been supplemented by artists and their families who give vigor to the town. Before their arrival there had already been a touch of cheap construction—jerry-building, as the English say—flimsy structures and red-tile roofs, instead of native stone. It is by the influence of these craftsmen that these innovations are being swept aside in favor of the better patterns of the past. Today Campden stands almost without a trace of the recent centuries—an example of early beauty with hardly a rival in the British Isles.

Do I merely repeat a current phrase? Perhaps I can not find so high a beauty where streets are bare of trees, where houses stand compact. There are gardens in the

rear; but the high street, lovely in so many details of roof and window, is too stark. It does not lie upon a hill to command a view, or offer a castle where one may plan a siege. It has no cathedral, with its close and turf. Nor is beauty complete unless it engage the ear as well as eye. Here is no stream, as at Bibury, nor wooded slope that feels the wind, nor is there an ocean, as at Lynton, to sound far off upon the shingle.

As for the nose—but then I have no nose. When I thrust this forward fellow at a flowering bush, as in the lovely towns of Surrey, the obeisance is merely pretense. A scent on my handkerchief if mingled with the loose tobacco in my pocket, though it chills a finer nose, to mine is still aroma. So I do not know how Campden smells.

The railway respects the town's antiquity, and it hides in the hills a mile away with its station in the meadows.

The wool market still stands in the high street, now empty of its merchants. But in the fourteenth century, which was the golden age of Cotswold wool, the market was crowded at shearing time. Into town came horses packed with wool. This was sorted here and samples were passed about for appraisal and rival bidding. William Grevel was then the richest merchant, and his handsome house of native stone still stands. But there are many handsome houses, and there is a church at the foot of the street where it runs off toward Stratford.

We passed a school as we entered town—a long stone building—and from its Tudor windows there emerged

a brisk song of treble voices. It was so gayly pitched, we knew that recess was near. And presently little girls came trooping from the door, in the shortest skirts I have ever seen, and with long pre-Raphael legs. They were doubtless planning already how they might grow up as lanky ladies of Burne-Jones.

The Noel Arms is an excellent hotel. In the lounge is a great hearth smoked with use. There are easy chairs, prints and souvenirs. One might here weather out a rainy day without continual trotting to the window for a change of sky. There is a garden and a bowling green, a sitting room where I was pleased to see a fire even on this moderate day. Hogarth's Progress of a Rake is framed on the walls of the dining room. I have followed many times his advance to Gin Lane, to a squalid attic and the gallows, and always with a sickish feeling. This is the eighteenth century on its dirtier side, and it is a balance against the great hats of Gainsborough's velvet portraits.

The Noel Arms is of slighter pretense than the Lygon Arms, its famous neighbor at Broadway. But Broadway lies on a road too thick with tourists. Its courtyard is noisy with motor horns. Its shops are set to catch a foreign shilling. It is ticketed and labeled, and has sold itself for cheap advantage.

The American tourist sees so few of the English towns. But suppose we let the sleeping dogs lie in their cushioned tonneaus, for by this neglect remoter districts are left unspoiled. A dozen cities, like lightning rods, draw the storm and thunder of their travel.

So we should be grateful that Campden is spared.

Perhaps it would be better to discard this chapter and let a false journal call Campden dull and void of all romance.

George went off in quest of the invariable. Collins puttered along the shop fronts. I set out to find the old mill that housed the guild of artists.

For once a wood carver from Campden had come to Cleveland and had settled among us for the summer to carve the portraits of children in low relief on blocks of wood. Nor do I know anything more charming than several of these groups. Marble and bronze seem a record of things accomplished—the praise of death and the tribute that marks the end. But the grain and line of wood, its blending color, its swirl of pattern, catch the fleeting quality of life. Life must express life, and wood is a living thing. Circumstance had thrown me with the wood carver, and I had found him of so likable a nature that I went to look him up.

"Where do I find this mill?" I asked.

Whereat the merchant to whom I put my question pointed a finger bent with rheumatism, and I was at a loss to know whether he meant me to turn or keep straight on.

"Which way?" I asked.

And then I saw that he was cross-eyed also.

So I pretended that I understood, and went forth with confusion doubled.

As all men do who respect the constitution

CHAPTER XVII

THE PREFACE OF A CARPENTER

Snug, the joiner, you, the lion's part.

AND as I was searching for the mill and the artist who fashioned little children, I kept wondering what quality resides in wood, even in its humbler use, that it spreads so gentle a contagion to those who work upon it.

Workers in iron are toughened to the metal of their occupation. They strive in din and discord to defeat the primal purposes of nature, until their path is a mountain's wreckage which a hundred years can hardly

mend. Theirs is the dyer's hand indelible. And men of lead thrive only in the dusk of cellars. Their muss of labor must be scoured away, and in slang we call any man a plumber who botches work. Is it merely my fancy that in darker circumstance they would be conspirators against the state? Their very muttering that seeps upward through the carpet is a hint of a plot to blow the furnace. They carry the lantern of Guy Fawkes, and a prudent despot would lay them by the heels.

And then I thought about the carpenter. He is a creature of a smiling mood—plump with good conscience and digestion. He is a friend of the children and the cook. Unshaved, he still is clean, and he spits far less than plumbers. For lunch he ends with pie, as all men do who respect the constitution. He thrives in daylight and is happy on an outside wall. His chips are fragrant of the woods. The tapping of his hammer marks the return of spring, for he comes upon the job with the earliest daffodils that strew the lawn. His plane and saw are the lilt of sunny days, co-rival with the lawn-mower, and their discard warms a winter hearth. He who works in wood comes close to the heart of nature, close therefore to the love of men.

I once knew a physician who prescribed whittling to his nervous patients. Did he know the secret that I hint? Had science whispered in his ear that companionship with wood is health—a healing lenitive in a bustling world of iron and steel?

In a village of wooden shoes there is no fret. Will Wimble was an honest fellow, and he gave willow

whistles to his friends. Men carry a stick not for its support, but as a symbol of their accord with nature. The thinker's pipe is a root that is carved and polished —a root that has sucked its nurture from deep within the earth—and as the smoke arises it is the peace of woodland that moves slowly through the thought.

"Am I right for the old silk mill?" I asked. And then I saw its rackety building down the street.

But luck was against me. The wood carver had fallen to appendicitis and, after an operation, was now convalescent in London.

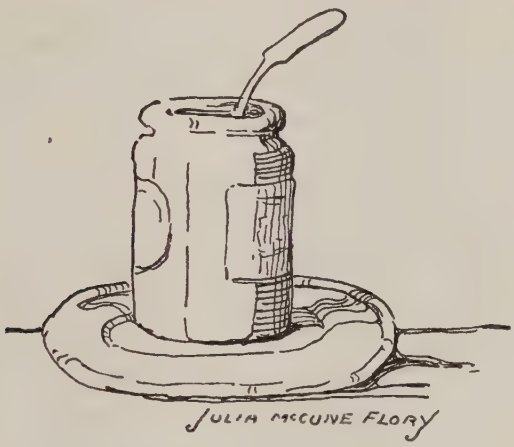
I was shown, however, the shops of the several crafts, including my friend's room with its blocks of wood and tools as he had left them. Among photographs of his work I recognized several children of my acquaintance. My guide was good enough to say that he had heard of me, so vanity put the hour on tiptoe. He was a silversmith, and I purchased a spoon that looked as if it would feel at home in raspberry jam.

There was a shop for metal work—brackets and andirons. I met the man who made them, and he was of such gentle speech that I now regret my ugly comment on his trade. I am not disposed, however, to retract on plumbers.

These artisans export their wares and they are thus in accord with modern methods, yet their gathering and quality recall a condition that has mostly vanished with the use of steam. The English village was once sufficient in itself, then steam expanded some of them to cities and neglected others until they withered and

decayed. Later in the Midlands I shall comment on this with added detail.

George in his village Odyssey for samplers had alighted on a shop of engaging wares. And the owner had warmed to his interest and taken him home where there were other treasures not for sale. I am told that this is the usual device of such merchants to whet



It would feel at home in raspberry jam

a buyer's eagerness and tempt him to extravagant offers, but in Campden it was not an instance of this shrewdness.

George had been so pleased, that he had asked permission to bring us back with him. It appeared at first that the owner would not be at home, yet it was arranged that he would leave the front door open and we could push back the china cat that stood on guard. And would we please feel at liberty to go over the house wherever our curiosity directed—upstairs and

down, kitchen, bedrooms and attic. We accuse the English of inhospitality, yet can this be matched at home? At my own door there is a bolt and chain, and a maid with an eye that is cold to strangers.

But, in a change of plan, he met us on the sidewalk—Commander Hart retired, as I gathered, from the British navy, a courteous gentleman of studious habits. Our excursion through his house, with George to ask the intelligent questions, was an agreeable hour. For George it was a display of old furniture, of china and pewter, of colored prints and brass. But to me it was a glimpse of English living.

A stone-paved hallway at the side ran past the sitting room. This corridor was without staircase and thick with antiquities but, despite this decoration, it seemed like an inclosed alley from the street. And its pavement yielded an echo. The sitting room in front was of moderate size with mullioned windows. There was an open fire with couch in front. A dog lay on the hearth winking at the flames, and a smaller dog was curled like an anchovy in the sunlight of the window seat. A case was filled with books in leather bindings worn by many readers, and the titles were of history and of riper fiction. I pulled down a volume of Tom Jones with yellow margins.

Queen Anne and Sheraton do not roll upon my tongue. My approval of a chair rests upon its comfort and on the manner in which its cushions supplement the pads of nature. And here was a room of familiar comfort where a man might smoke to midnight and listen to adventure on the sea.

The dining room was dimly lighted by a single window on an area between crowded buildings. There was a cavernous fireplace. Across the room a string was stretched above the level of the head and on this a ham was suspended, together with red peppers and herbs. A narrow refectory table ran down the middle of the room. At the rear was a pantry with vegetables along the shelves.

Stairs to the second floor mounted from the dining room past a landing with a cupboard for spirits. In a bedroom I recall exposed timbering, rough-hewn.

And then we climbed to the attic. This was pitched up to the ridgepole, with spider webs and an only window at the rear. It was cluttered with discarded chairs and tables, and a file of books was ranged on the floor along the wall.

There was also a loom, a carder and a spinning wheel. Here the mistress of the house had woven homespun out of Cotswold wool bought on the street below—she and her daughters, as I like to think. And the soft whirring of the wheel mingled with the buzz of summer insects.

Of all the house this attic yields the most enduring memory. Here Chatterton might have worked, calling the spirit of the dead Rowley from the shadow. Here he might have aged in candle smoke the parchment that baffled London. And from this ghostly room he might have journeyed to his attic off the Strand to die of hunger. Nothing in letters is quite so pitiful as this child in whom antiquity burned so hot that he devised poems whose falsity only time betrayed. I have never

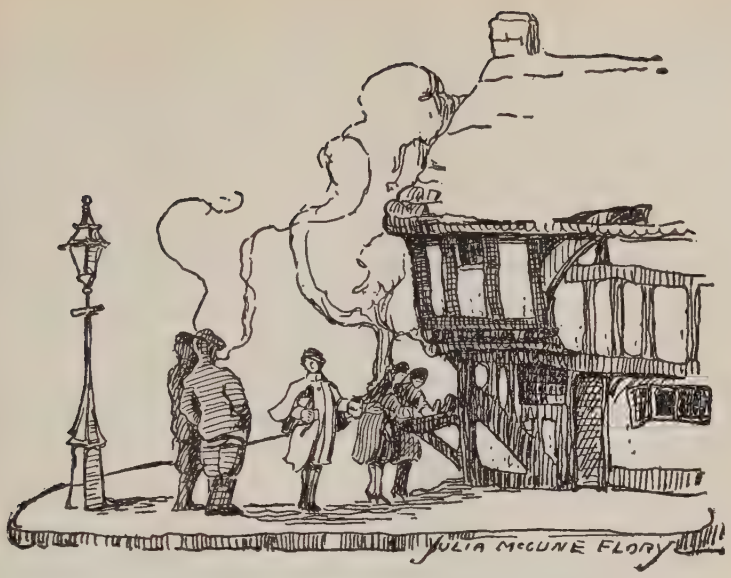
seen in St. Mary's church, Bristol, the great chest from which he maintained he drew the Rowley poems, nor the cottage where he worked; yet Campden will serve.

And here children must have played at pirates and looked for hostile sails across the gardens. For in my own childhood there was once an attic with sunlight across the floor, and I know deeply of these broad kingdoms of the dark.

All afternoon we pedaled on until, toward supper time, we came to Stratford and found a pleasant hotel that looked upon the Avon.

George prays for his daily sampler. I quote from Campden's offering.

> Bless'd are the humble souls that see
> Their emptiness and poverty.
> Treasures of grace to them are given
> And crowns of joy laid up in Heaven.
>
> Elizabeth Hodge is my name
> And with my fingers work the same
> That all my friends may plainly see
> What care my parents took of me.
> 1811 In the 13 year of her age.



I do not strain the word to entire alertness

CHAPTER XVIII

STRATFORD AND ITS MOTOR HORNS

They throng who should buy first, as if . . . trinkets had been hallowed and brought a benediction to the buyer.

STRATFORD is the mecca of a few thousand persons who still read Shakespeare, and of a million more who have the town upon their motor schedule—Americans, nearly all of them, who read chiefly a magazine from Philadelphia. These, wrapped in cozy rugs, have drowsed up from London, spent a glance on Windsor and an hour at Oxford with lunch wedged in, then limped stiffly into the Shakespeare Head at Stratford for an exorbitant cocktail in the bar.

Half of their waking hours (and I do not strain the word to entire alertness) will be given to the selection of picture post cards, with perhaps a crockery caldron painted with witches to hold matches in the den. Or they buy a plaque of wood with burned letters, "Good friend, for Jesus' sake forbeare." Possibly they carry off a framed Trinity in mother-of-pearl, or a microscopic volume that claims to be the smallest Shakespeare ever printed.

Yet, despite these fascinating freaks, they will not entirely neglect the big tent.

They are instructed to visit the house in Henley Street and to stand painfully on alternate legs while the cicerone drones his story, then go upstairs to see Sir Walter Scott's name scratched upon the window. They would add their own to the whitewash if they were not watched. They comment on a low ceiling and a wide hearth.

They next honk over to Shottery where some of them are too weary to leave the car. Others follow a prescribed path that circles through the house and look for chairs without a ribbon on which they are allowed to sit. They read the inscription in Trinity that marks the grave and criticize the spelling. They get one eye open for the grammar school; although, being wakened with a jerk, they find it on the wrong side of the street. Swiftly they examine the garden at New Place, then return to post cards and sonnets bound in ooze leather.

In the evening they pronounce the Avon narrower than their local river. At last they fall asleep (com-

parative no longer) in a hotel room whose door is marked with the name of a play they have not read.

This is inevitable. Grasmere is stifled with char-à-bancs that care not a tinker's rap for Wordsworth. St. Giles in London is a resort of those who neither know nor wish to know whether paradise were gained or lost. Gough Square is thick with ignorant tourists. Gray's Elegy, however, is so short that it can be read bouncing out to Stoke Poges. Tourists are seekers everywhere of visible souvenirs. They fit Trinculo's complaint in The Tempest, for they will ignore a man's living work and lay out ten doits to see him dead.

Native trippers are not offensive, for they mingle in the scene. To them Grasmere is a spot of natural advantage for a picnic; and it is enough for them, and me, that they find enjoyment in the lake and their outdoor lunch. Grasmere is theirs and they belong there. In a measure they are the folk of Wordsworth and they supplement his poems. I would not challenge their knowledge of the past any more than I would question our own crowds at Niagara concerning Father Hennepin. One may not wish to be entirely elbowed, yet it is an honest holiday. It is our pretense at a foreign shrine that offends. We should be strangers and with the better manners of a guest, yet we take possession. We are loud of speech, and our entrance fee claims title to the property. Shakespeare is ours, yet we neglect him. His birthplace belongs to another people, and we swagger as its landlord.

The Stratford of Shakespeare has disappeared except for a few real buildings and others in imitation, and

certainly its whole spirit has departed. We have reversed here the creed of immortality, for its soul is dead and only the body breathes. The town has become a range of booths outside a circus to catch an extra penny. It is a market of shoddy trifles which presently must be dusted in every quarter of the globe. One must respect an honest shrine or a joyous picnic ground, but here it is merely custom and shallow duty that fetches in the crowd.

One regrets that Washington Irving once settled at the Red Horse Hotel, that Barnum offered to buy the house in Henley Street for his museum in New York—that these two advertised Stratford and made it famous. Or perhaps it would have been better if Barnum had had his wicked way with Stratford—if he had lifted the birthplace to Broadway and saved the town from tourists. It would have added so little to the nightly ballyhoo at Times Square, and our racket would have stayed at home.

In its previous neglect Stratford must have been a peaceful village with its older life preserved. A lover of plays and verse might have wandered here beside the Avon to reconstruct the past. Now it were better if he went off through Arden to the west and pitched on any town. He will not find the tangible fact of birth and death, but birds will trill the songs that Shakespeare heard, trees rustle in the wind, and through the meadows a runnel of pleasant water bear the fancy off.

But Washington Irving came to Stratford, and Barnum, and William Winter, a hundred biographers and a

thousand journalists. Each smiled on country innocence, and Stratford is the abandoned sweetheart of them all.

Maiden ladies with withered thumbs

In our American phrase they sold the town to tourists throughout the world. So all day long motors rush in and out, maiden ladies with withered thumbs inside their Baedekers parade the streets, and stout men of

affairs addicted to the Follies take their inch of culture and plan to read Macbeth on a winter's night. Could Shakespeare have anticipated this patter of a million feet?

> Good friend, for Jesus' sake forbeare
> To dig the dust enclosed heare.

Yet Stratford, although it is sunk to circus use, played an important part in the drama of Shakespeare's life. It is his prologue and his epilogue.

If a man has had a normal happy boyhood he will turn to it in recollection through his life and its circumstance will be engraved upon him. No scene can lose identity and its detail will persist undiminished. It is because of this that writers return so often to their youth in their need of sharp impression. For any new creation this is the recurrent lumber of their storage, to be fetched out and painted with change of name to fit an altered use. Stevenson has confessed that a certain Scottish cove near Leith where he swam while still a lad, served his invention all around the world. Here he landed pirates from the southern seas, and used its familiar sand in a dozen stories of foreign plot; for its unblurred lines were sharper than sights but newly seen. Hugh Walpole acknowledges that he is forever moving his native town from one district to another, like scenery on wheels, and that he finds it always fresh for another plot. This is true of most writers, I believe. I am myself but a child who dreams his novel; yet were I moved to write of tropic islands, I would select a beach quite near at home where once I built a pier of sand and stones.

And this is true in deeper matters that stir the heart. For where a man is born, where he spends his receptive youth whose memory is indelible, that place must always be a major influence upon his after thought. No matter how far afield a man may write, his early years crop out and a child will guide his pen.

It is Stratford's folk who are the creatures of Shakespeare's Midsummer-Night's Dream and the crowd at an Athens he never saw. Carpenter and joiner, weaver and bellows mender, tinker and tailor, were the neighbors of his boyhood, and their play of Thisbe was borrowed from Coventry less than fifteen miles away. "What hempen home-spuns have we swaggering here?" And Cobweb and Mustard-Seed, Puck himself, were plucked from the summer Midlands to haunt an unknown Athens.

> Over hill, over dale,
> Thorough brush, thorough brier . . .

It is a lad's holiday, a truant's afternoon who runs from school.

> I know a bank whereon the wild thyme blows,
> Where oxlips and the nodding violet grows
> Quite over-canopied with luscious woodbine,
> With sweet musk-roses, and with eglantine.

This is the Avon and not an Attic stream. For where the poet writes of far-off lands, his terms and definition are near at home, and his pen gives "to airy nothing a local habitation and a name."

Has not Puck confessed it?

Through the forest have I gone,
But Athenian found I none . . .

Does not Titania speak of England?

The ox hath therefore stretch'd his yoke in vain,
The ploughman lost his sweat, and the green corn
Hath rotted ere his youth attain'd a beard:
The fold stands empty in the drowned field,
And crows are fatted with the murrion flock . . .

Run through the plays and find the crowded instance in which Shakespeare has used Stratford and the Midlands for his circumstance and description, and for his men and women. Is it not asserted that every flower of Shakespeare grows native in the garden of New Place? Birds and trees, no matter how his fancy transplants them in Italy, Greece and France, are most at home in the Stratford woods. Ophelia of Denmark twines in her hair a garland grown in Warwickshire. Macbeth's temple-haunting martlet sings across the Midlands. It is on English meadows that Hector looked from the walls of Troy. When Dido waved an Egyptian willow in her hand, she plucked it from the marshes beyond his native town. The very serpent of the Nile took her golden journey down the Thames.

Shakespeare uses the Stratford climate for the south of France. Here is Navarre, as we find it in Love's Labour's Lost:

When icicles hang by the wall,
And Dick the shepherd blows his nail,

And Tom bears logs into the hall,
And milk comes frozen home in pail,
When blood is nipp'd, and ways be foul,
Then nightly sings the staring owl.

On that beach of mine, in decency I would at least plant palms. But we are realists now.

And Tom bears logs into the hall

Twelfth Night is placed in Bohemia—still in its fairy days when it had a coast.

When that I was and a little tiny boy,
With hey, ho, the wind and the rain;
A foolish thing was but a toy,
For the rain it raineth every day.

With memory fresh from Cirencester, I know that this describes the English sky; but no hey, ho, persists in my recollection.

Instances are without number, and any reader may make his own. The text says that the Forest of Arden

was in France, yet it is really to a wood in Warwickshire that the duke was banished at the end of a long day's tramp. It was beside a Midland stream that Jaques wandered and Rosalind's name was carved. Dogberry is an English constable and, although dressed for Messina, his bell had sounded in Henley Street. Touchstone is a yokel from a cow yard. Sir Toby was nightly drunk on Stratford ale, though he swigged it in Illyria. It is the eye of childhood that fears a painted devil and, as he wrote the phrase, Shakespeare reverted to his boyhood and the time when he had seen the players from Coventry with a red hell mouth upon their wagon.

When Shakespeare's men and women speak strictly within their characters, it may be wholly drama. But when they forget themselves and circumstance (Hamlet, the prince, against the insolence of office and the law's delay, "the oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,") then it must be Shakespeare himself who speaks. In these dramatic contradictions is the material for biography—the theory that Brandes used. And from reiterated figure, so much of which fits Stratford rather than Italy or France, we may know how indelibly he recalled his boyhood beside the Avon. A lyric mood released him best, and his songs are the pageant of his youth.

All writers interpret foreign ways by an understanding grown at home. Today, perhaps, with wider travel, we are at pains to dissemble our nativity and appear as citizens of the world, but our pretense is shallow and older memories still persist. Like the tide we run

to sea, but any turning moon will fetch us home. And Shakespeare was marked with Stratford, no matter where his scene was laid.

A student knows Shakespeare best when he has walked in these Midland lanes and has sat idly beside the Avon, when he has spent the day drifting on its sunny mirror. He will be of shallow knowledge until he has summoned to his heart the trees, the hedges and the meadows, and has let all country sounds play upon his ear. He must know the aroma of fresh furrows, live with thatch and weathered timbering, be a comrade in a country tap, and peep through windows. A man who reads Shakespeare told me once that an afternoon's ramble to Snitterfield in spring had given him a deeper understanding than all the volumes of the Variorum.

Nor should Stratford be neglected. A man of generous opinion will be unruffled by the tourists. He will mix in the crowd without bitterness, and judge them to be pilgrims like himself. For a Pharisee has scarcely time for any regard beyond his nose. And when with this mellow attitude he has checked the sights, he will wander by himself through the narrower streets until clocks are dials and purses once again are pokes.

The old Memorial Theater has burned, and its walls totter with bare and broken windows. But this is an improvement. The building's apologists used to assert that it was of Norman type and that a scallop around the top was crenelation. But the structure must have thought, as its walls went up, that a foaming vat would be its tenant. An abandoned brewery beside our park at home is its fellow in design. This theater stood,

moreover, on the fairest spot of Stratford, looking up the river to the spire of Trinity. And now, as with our brewery, in its ruin there is a touch of dignity; for they are alike in broken purpose.

Plans are under way for the demolition of the ruin and the construction of a new theater. *Ora pro nobis*—may lightning not strike twice alike. Until this is built, the plays are performed through the usual summer season in a picture house. Plays were in rehearsal, but their performance had not begun.

But if the Memorial Theater was ugly, its company of players under Benson was the chief college of English actors, and many at the top were grounded here. It is said that the excellent speech of the English theater was learned at Stratford. I have never had the good fortune to see a production; but the new opinion of the stage taught by Reinhardt and the Russians finds them following too obediently old traditions, without that experiment of scene and lighting that marks advance.

If the new theater now planned is less cumbered by convention, more receptive to a modern hint, it will be not merely a dead man's shrine, but a living influence upon the stage. Shakespeare in his cerecloth awaits a vital resurrection.

On a previous visit the entire wardrobe of costumes was laid out on the grass to air—hundreds of sprawling arms and legs—and I walked pleasantly among them picking a character for each garment. It was a monstrous puzzle picture with parts all scattered. It was all right for clowns and low fellows like Sir Toby, yet Hermione and Ophelia seemed soiled in the clutter. I

prefer Rosalind's hose when they are screened with skirts and ready for the curtain.

But neither prosperity nor fire has laid its hand on Trinity. Its walls spring from the thirteenth century, and its spire speaks with the best tradition of the past. Here we are on ground that Shakespeare's boyhood saw. The breeze at twilight knows his songs by heart, and the lapping of water at the dam deals only in his ancient verse. Here Yorick's skull was tossed aside in the digging of a newer grave, and ghosts that later paced the battlements of Denmark walked first at midnight on these crowded lanes to send a chill to Henley Street.

Everyone who ever entered England has stood beneath these trees. On king, poet and pilgrim has fallen a silent reverence. For this is the shrine that stands next to the tomb of Christ—the burial place of the foremost man of all the ages, whose pen was divinity itself.

In 1586 Camden wrote that Stratford was famous as the birthplace of an archbishop and of the lord mayor of London. And hardly was the ink of his Latin dry, when Hamlet was played upon the bank. And still for a hundred years no one cared from what village the poet came. The seventeenth century and much of the eighteenth ranked Shakespeare as less than Milton, on a parity perhaps with Congreve and Abraham Cowley. There was, it is true, tribute to his genius, but it was judged unschooled and ragged.

When he was played it was mostly in garbled versions. It was thought better if Lear survived his tragedy to sun himself forever beneath his pear tree while Cordelia

ruled. Juliet wakened in her tomb to marry Romeo. As You Like It was twisted to a bawdy tale, as Hollywood would do it now if it saw money in the change. There were extra witches in Macbeth and another scene around the caldron to please the cheaper seats. Measure for Measure and Much Ado About Nothing were thrown together under the title Law Against Lovers. Timon of Athens was "made a play." And Stratford meantime was but the poet's dunghill.

Nor was it until the latter half of the eighteenth century that Stratford took fame from Shakespeare. The start of this was in 1769 when Garrick held a "poetical festival" here. "The amusements," we may read, "consisted of a public breakfast at the Town Hall; the performance of the Oratorio of Judith in the church at Stratford; a public ordinary at the amphitheatre; an assembly; a masquerade; the recitation, by Garrick, of an ode and oration in praise of Shakespeare; an exhibition of fire-works; and a horse race for a silver cup." Everything was included—food, music, betting and a dance—everything except a play.

Stratford is the prologue. It is the influence of all five acts.

There is a legend that in the year 1583 a company of players came to Stratford under the direction of the famous Henslow who had employed Marlowe, Kyd and others in his string of writers. Shakespeare, it is said, who was still a village lad and newly married under pressure, sought out Henslow and showed him a comedy on which he worked. It was by Henslow's persuasion he left his wife to seek his fortune.

Whether this be true or not, Shakespeare, for reasons of his own, went off to London. And he found his immortality among the rowdies on the Bank. It was a London of unlighted streets, of gabled half-timbered shops, of signboards, of houses carpeted with rushes, of traffic that did not use a wheel, of a clean Thames, of suburbs beyond the wall—a London of wooden trenchers without a fork, of a first tobacco from Virginia. Old St. Paul's was standing. London Bridge and wherries were the only crossing of the river. Bedsteads had but lately come to common use, and a billet of wood was still a pillow.

On that morning when he crossed Hugh Clopton's bridge and, turning, saw the spire of Trinity, did he realize his genius that London would strike to flame? Or did he ever know, even in the years to come, that he was the man to top the northern race? "Nor marble," he wrote, "nor the gilded monuments of princes, shall outlive this powerful rime." And yet this boast was the fashion of his time and was used in altered phrase by many poets. I wonder when it was, if ever, that he discovered his own power and surmised that his pen would put its mark on life forever—that wherever men shall think upon a problem, his phrase will be their argument.

For he was so careless of his plays. When once produced, they were thrust aside. When he retired to Stratford, they lay neglected in the lumber of the theater. It was his friends, not he, who published them. He bequeathed his bedstead, but made no mention of his plays, some of which were still unprinted.

We cannot be sure just what plays he wrote, or whether every scene is his—and a hundred scholars still quarrel.

Or he may have written plays that are entirely lost. A recent biographer has advanced the theory that Shakespeare in retirement at Stratford must have turned to his desk again after The Tempest was completed, and that in an attic of some Warwickshire

Another manuscript may still be found

manor house another manuscript may still be found. For on occasion his old friends of the theater came to see him; and did they never demand another play, and whet his lagging zeal by anecdotes of those days when they had lived together on Shoreditch? Other writers had come upon the stage, and did these upstarts never stir his envy and force his pen to action? How could a man in middle life wander always in his garden, while newer wit and tragedy possessed the stage?

So Stratford is the final jig. For here Shakespeare died on April 23, 1616, when he was barely fifty-two. Unless it be the Bankside where the Globe once stood—a district covered now by Barclay and Perkins' brewery, but with a lane along the buildings still called the Clink as in the days of Paris garden—unless it be the Bankside, no spot comes so close to the heart of Shakespeare.

In his essence he is to me the poet rather than the dramatist. Nor do I think that his real readers mind so much as they assert that our times keep his dramas from the stage. There is something in the very print of them that lies beyond an actor's voice. We have our own rhythms for his verse, and they sound best unmouthed in the silence of the heart.

For an hour of twilight we sat by the river in the yard of Trinity, and then we went to bed.

We spent the next morning on the Avon with a pleasant neglect of Henley Street. Collins took the oars, George steered, and I was indolent ballast at the bow.

We drifted under Hugh Clopton's bridge, from whose parapet Shakespeare's line may have dangled once for fish. We rowed past the foot of gardens where punts were moored, past bathhouses where little children dived. Here, perhaps, Shakespeare swam with other lads. "Little wanton boys that swim on bladders," and far beyond their depth. He was to remember this when he wrote of Wolsey's fall.

The oarlocks grunted in even rhythm. Water dripped in quick staccato from the blades. Grasses hung upon

the bank and trailed upon the stream—pencils on a moving slate whose message was dispatched to him who knew its language.

I read aloud:

That time of year thou mayst in me behold
When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang
Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,
Bare ruin'd choirs, where late the sweet birds sang.
In me thou see'st the twilight of such day
As after sunset fadeth in the west;
Which by and by black night doth take away,
Death's second self, that seals up all in rest.
In me thou see'st the glowing of such fire,
That on the ashes of his youth doth lie,
As the death-bed whereon it must expire,
Consum'd with that which it was nourish'd by.
This thou perceiv'st, which makes thy love more strong,
To love that well which thou must leave ere long.

For this was the message of the trailing grass. We rowed until the Avon shoaled to yellow sand.

In the evening a band played in the park along the river, and the younger folk came out to dance. The flooring was the well worn sod. The crowd seemed void of tourists—for it was the post-card hour—and the company were neighbors. There were several lads in blue coats marked with school badges, and others apparently of a lower station—shopkeepers in stiff black hats, to whom a one-step was a solemn business. Presently Collins picked out a young girl and danced

with her, while George and I watched from a bench like grandsires cut in alabaster.

Beyond the old Memorial stood a bronze statue of Shakespeare, and I think the lively music turned the corner to his ear. If I know the man he found pleasure in the sound. For it was a merry Shakespeare the world first knew—a man of laughter, jest and song.

The luggage man insisted

CHAPTER XIX

AN EXCELLENT CHAPTER, BECAUSE IT'S SHORT

My purposes are broken off.

WE carried our heavy bags next morning to the railway station and checked them off to York. Here we met the one discourtesy of our trip. The luggage man insisted that all the bags travel on one check. But George was undecided whether he would cycle all the way and, as he might arrive at York ahead of us by train, this arrangement did not suit. It was when all of us had lost our tempers that the luggage man consented to separate checks. We came out of the station with the wrath of Lady Macbeth when she finds the old man to have too much blood in him.

Sweetness had departed out of Arden. I must con-

clude that the L. M.'s breakfast kippers sat sourly on his stomach.

One may cycle to Warwick by direct road, on a circuit to the west through Snitterfield, or through Charlecote to the east. To Snitterfield I had once jogged behind a lazy horse to see property once owned by Shakespeare's grandfather, but chiefly for the lanes and hedges on the way. And on this trip, perhaps on detour, I had passed the great house of the Trevelyans—distinguished by two generations of historians. I still recall the trees of the park and my awe that so much delightful learning had lived beneath the chimneys.

Or if one choose Charlecote, he will see a herd of deer grazing across a meadow and it will recall Shakespeare's trespass against Sir Thomas Lucy and the Merry Wives. And it is an absurdity that a country gentleman living in obscurity should grow immortal because a poet, in merest legend, once climbed his wall and shot a deer. One is shown the great hall where we must suppose that Shakespeare trembled at his sentence.

It was the disgrace of this, as one story goes, that sent him off to London. But I choose to believe that a shrewish wife was a nearer cause. She was seven years older than he, of common country understanding, unschooled, and their indiscretion had tricked them into marriage. His more pious biographers gloss this with explanation, yet a bare fact stands. And Stratford must have fretted him, a rude town without advantage. Each road teased his vagrant thought. It was the city called him, that he might live in looser tether.

What ghosts must dwell upon these London roads! Garrick walked to London, and with him went Sam Johnson whose pocket bulged with Irene. They had one horse and, in Johnson's phrase, they rode and tied. Goldsmith came upon the roads from Ireland, and Swift went back and forth with bitter thoughts of failure. Chatterton came from Bristol with his Rowley manuscripts, Marlowe from Canterbury, and Carlyle later from the north. Turn at hazard as you will in earlier English biography, each volume is a chronicle of roads—of travelers who cast their genius in the central fire of London.

For London, all through the centuries, has been the Mecca for men of talent. Every great city of ripe age has served this purpose, but London chiefly is vital to the books we read, to the traditions that we follow. Nowadays in America New York extends its opportunity, but I cannot think its offer is quite the same. The world of letters has changed in its journey over seas, and New York has too little leisure for a pen among its dividends and profit. I wonder if literature really thrives in so hot and rich an air.

It is early morning on this road toward Warwick and there is no need of haste. Let us break our journey, and sit beneath a hedge in Arden to speculate upon these matters—whether scribblers find advantage in New York, whether talent yields there the finer flower.

I remember once in reading Lockhart . . .

Had stood beside the Tweed

CHAPTER XX

A READER MAY SKIP TO PAGE 238

The dull brain perplexes and retards.

I REMEMBER once in reading Lockhart that I came on a letter of Sir Walter Scott to a friend who was a dramatist in London—Joanna Baillie, long since forgotten. This letter was sent from Abbotsford and lamented that writers did not sprout in groves like beeches from a common soil. Scott, perhaps, had stood beside the Tweed and, as he listened to the murmur of the windy branches, he took the sound to be that gossip of their craft whereby each tree counseled with a neighbor to its better growth. If he could have carried his figure into modern life he would have added that rubber workers flock to Akron, breakfast cooks to

Battle Creek, and that in every city certain districts huddle commodities together for their common profit. As for writers, he might have hit on London Grub Street.

There is advantage, of course, in association with those of one's own pursuit, and today New York is the writers' point of gathering in America. I myself once lived in Greenwich Village and from my window I could look into rooms across the way where writers worked. I saw how busily another of my trade clicked his keys and threw aside his completed sheets. In his failures, marked by a long sucking of a pencil, there was comfort that he matched my own stupidity. Sometimes I saw him at the door with wallet in hand, and then I knew his belabored hero had escaped at last triumphant from a final chapter and that the bulky package was out for sale.

New York City is the Grub Street of America—its Little Britain. It is in its degree the Mermaid Tavern, the Cheshire Cheese, the Temple, the coffeehouses of Covent Garden—those haunts where hacks once rubbed their wits for a random spark and patched their ragged thought with theft from a companion.

It is the city of America where a writer has the fairest chance (good fortune or ill luck) of sitting at lunch with another man of ink, where evenings can fetch cronies of a sort together. Sonnets rub their ancient elbows against free verse. Melody and dissonance may quarrel as friends. A brain that is sucked and dry may catch a hint that will furnish tomorrow's article. Or if a hero seems lost beyond recovery, a method of honorable release will surely pop upon one when stom-

ach and brain are fed together. Nothing dispels fatigue so quickly as good talk. It is a skirmish, a field of exercise and pleasant warfare, where even the vanquished take a profit.

And so these colonies have their use. I remember, once, at Monhegan off the coast of Maine where painters try their brushes on the sea, with what high competition each canvas of the day displayed itself at night. The salon was the top of the hotel's piano hushed from discord, and the mantelpiece swept clear of fringe and vase. Each evening had its triumph, its failure and that discontent which is the spur of honest work.

If a man shall adopt the apprenticeship of writing in a town that devotes itself, let us say, to iron and steel, he has days of disillusion because his work seems trivial. New York, however, is a hundred cities; and although their elbows rub they are quite separate and one may choose the city that he wants.

But at home it requires courage to meet the sequence of rejection in circumstance where success is judged in tonnage and in numbers. For if a dream be thrown upon the scale of commerce no weight is small enough to hold it level. One must work with shade pulled close. He must display the pretense of a major occupation among the penny pickers to shield the ambition of his heart. Every man about him seems bent to a mighty task that moves in the trade routes of the world. One builds a bridge—a longest span without support. Another loans vast sums and is glib with dollar signs and millions.

In such a tempest how shall the airy fabric of a thought endure? The apprentice writer must move with the stride of business even in his hours of meditation, because that is the formula of his rank and street. If only, the novice sighs, he might lose himself in a mighty city where the uproar was impersonal. In a nook, though he would hear the tempest, it would sweep past him unregarded.

Once upon a time, at home when I was still in commerce, I used to steal an afternoon now and then to write—as another man shuts his desk for golf—but I departed always with a sense of guilt. For I broke an accepted custom; and if a curtain stirred upon my street as I slunk home, I felt that I was spied on as a laggard. In such circumstance, the writer's essay, his story and his poem, are too slight—and his ideal is but a gossamer torn by rougher wind.

So it is in association, for better or for worse, that writers console one another in their trivial calling; and each blows upon another's fire to keep it lighted. I remember once reading of Stevenson's youth at Fontainebleau, and how the hard world was excluded by his comrades' adulation. The great projects of kings and politicians stood far off, pale beside the hot rhetoric which filled their days Their art was in tender leaf and needed shelter. These were the essays of juvenilia —of little value in themselves, but the seed of flowers to come. And at Monhegan one of these novices when at home counted cash in a department store. Among his neighbors his brushes were but playthings in contempt, but he was king at Monhegan's salon of the lonely ocean.

There is stimulus also in crowded streets, in windows that glitter with the produce of the world, in tall buildings scheming of profit and adventure. Drama jostles in the subway. A thousand plots bump elbows at the curb. Each face shows half revealed its mystery. The din of horn and wheel, of outcry and alarm, of sodden step, and feet which tread the yellow path of pleasure—all these mingle in the mighty music of mankind. Never before has such a symphony mustered to a single baton. And if life be the pigment of a writer's brush, here are colors undreamed in lonely places.

And for a writer New York is, also, the general market. There is advantage of a surer livelihood in the proximity of editors. At this close range the taste of each may be studied, and one may learn which desk his wares will fit. Rejection may be averted, and that disappointment which dulls the pen through failure. Or a writer will pick up points of policy—what kind of story, what verse, what article will match the scheme of the months to come. A centenary may be marked for feature; and the writer, catching the hint betimes, may swerve his pen to profit. If there is a niche for a Christmas essay it is best to know of it in April; for seasonal products are always fashioned out of season.

Consignments go by preference to those who are near at hand. Manuscripts, untampered by first readers and delay, may be sent directly to an editor, when you know him, for quick decision.

Or again, because of some volume's huge success, a new fashion will arise and editors will be eager to catch

an echo of its profits. A few weeks after Main Street caught the country every news stand from Katahdin to Tia Juana flared with the gaudy jackets of imitated village life. On these occasions time is short, lest in delay or other novelty the fickle public lose its interest. And so a hint will circulate the Village, to be stale when it leaves the island. It is by this that alertness is taught, and a dreaming indolence roused to action. Competition is strong in New York. There are so few crumbs and so many sparrows. It is a give-and-take, a rough-and-tumble. And if any man blows big the bubble of his reputation, a hundred soapy pipes are dipped in emulation. New York seems to disprove the adage that he travels the fastest who travels alone.

Nor is success acclaimed except by recognition of the capital. It is New York that tests the country's wares, and preference and fame light most easily on its citizens. The soot from a stack falls on its neighbors' roofs. Unless New York nods its approval, any talent beyond the river is but provincial. By general consent we have set the great city on a pedestal and its assertion is our law. Scorn is fed by flattery, until Manhattan accepts itself as a major portion of the continent. In New York, therefore, must reputation be acquired, and residence there is the first step in its accomplishment. It is our country coal that feeds the stack, but we do not profit by the smudge.

But if residence in New York holds advantage for the novice who needs protection from cool indifference at home, for those secondly who work in letters solely for a livelihood where success depends on the swift

diagnosis of an editor's taste, for those again whose best stimulus is the noisy multitude of life, for those lastly who seek the cheaper tongue of fame; I am not sure but that it holds some disadvantage for those writers whose temper is less competitive, whose desire thrives best in meditation, whose ambition is toward that inner relation of himself and his immediate circumstance which may be the finer art.

To everyone his taste. To everyone must be allowed a choice of environment. From one bottle comes medicine and poison. Let us consider New York from this second aspect.

"How far is Warwick?" asked George. "Perhaps we had better be getting on."

"But I am not through," I said.

"Then I'll sleep a bit," he answered. "Please don't stop. Your voice will sooth me." And he flung himself face down upon the ground.

Presently he spoke, with voice somewhat smothered in the grass.

"I don't much like New York," he said. "If you have any dirty opinion against it, my dreams will be happier."

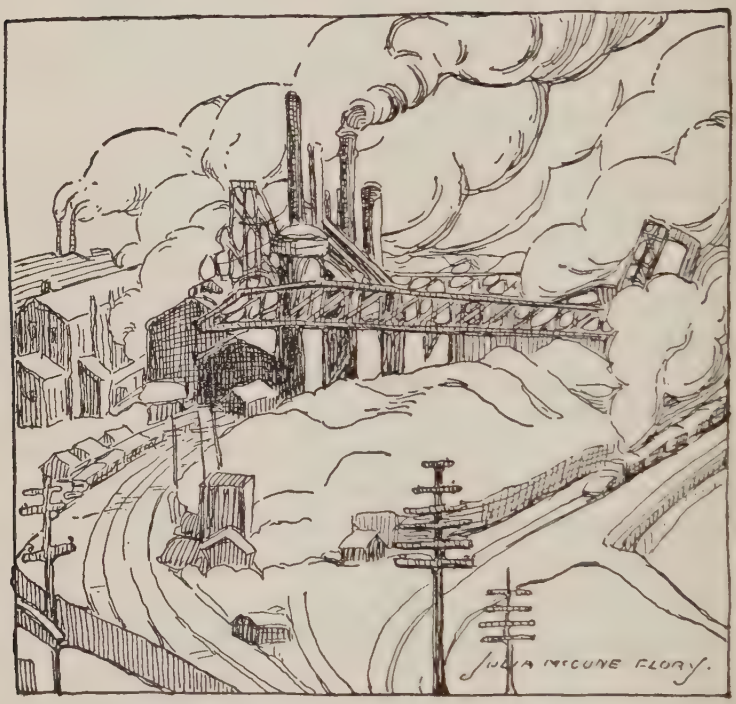
So I began again, with soft lullaby, to rock him off to sleep.

"New York," I started.

"One minute," George interrupted. "I am lying on a stone. Now begin your song of hate."

New York differs from the London of Shakespeare or Queen Anne, even the London or Paris of today. The genius of America lies in trade and manufacture.

To the production and marketing of goods there has been applied a shrewdness that places commerce in the field of science. Our best trained intelligence—except for a sprinkling in law and medicine—our best trained



The genius of America lies in trade and manufacture

effort builds machines. It practices for economy of labor and it tries for speed. It would seem that time and space, once the dull categories of a college lecture, are now judged to be mankind's chief enemy; for their destruction is the prayer of progress. Now I lay me, and may I tomorrow devise a faster method and

increase my sales. The flying wheel of manufacture and of transit is our largest boast—the greatest speed upon a beach, pants and coats that run to millions, ships to clip a record, buildings to overtop the clouds. Methods are used that were not known two hundred years ago, that the English and the French do not know today. We may brag of democracy in government, but trade is the despot of our lives.

"Bbbiiirrrhhh," said George.

When Swift journeyed up to London to take position with Sir William Temple, I fancy there was a deep respect for intellect as such, for scholarship, for wit and humor, and for all those niceties of literature that we neglect. It was an amateur world, where the only profession was that of a gentleman. Times change, and our obeisance now is not to lonely and individual achievement, but to an accomplishment that results from the control of men, and money, and machines. A desk is now not a place to write but a board of buttons to be pressed. A captain of industry need not be literate, for a secretary attends to "ain't" and split infinitives. Swift, with his sharper genius, might succeed in New York today, but Steele and Goldsmith would be lost. Addison at best would have had a column on a daily paper; and Shakespeare, in lack of audience for his spoken word, must have turned to Hollywood.

Which of those old fellows would now climb high?—Pope, I think, for he was at heart a hired soldier and could click out verses for a syndicate—Fielding, Thackeray and Dickens, because of their vigor which we still

respect. But Scott's missile would fall without explosion. Keats and Shelley would win little prizes in poetry magazines. Anyone may make his own list of success and failure.

And in order that today's demand for goods shall keep pace with their production, advertising has sprung up. It is the younger brother of our mass production—or perhaps its father, as its agents tell us. Let us call the two boys twins.

Advertising is not only to apprise the public of a new commodity, but to persuade it of its necessity, often to urge extravagance in the name of progress, to make unnecessary shopping the major industry of idle women. That this diverts several hours a day from reform is its only merit; for a yard of unneeded ribbon is less subversive than a silly club for uplift. Be this as it may, it is a deeper stain upon the intellect to be ignorant of a breakfast food or brand of baking soda than to be unacquainted with any prime stroke of history. What was once known as puffing and was a method held in disrepute has come to be one of our largest industries. Its attack is against a new monster known as sales resistance. If everyone would buy something once a day, prosperity would flourish. Old Grime's hen—"every day she laid an egg"—is held aloft as the shoppers' model. Is not real-estate activity a fretting against what you have, dread stagnation our contentment?

In the London of Queen Anne these questions of distribution were of minor importance. Business itself was secondary, and was held to stain the soft fingers of

a gentleman. So when literature flocked to London and the coffeehouses of Covent Garden, to the Mermaid and the Cheshire Cheese, its contact with trade was accidental. Nor was writing a trade.

In a strict sense the best-remembered writers of Queen Anne were amateurs. Many of them held easy office in the government—red tape was invented for their benefit—and for a competence they exchanged a sleepy hour or so of morning at a routine task. Writing, except for the unconsidered hacks who toiled in attics toward oblivion, was a vivid avocation.

I have a word to write on this spirit of the amateur. Whenever a man shall write to satisfy his ideal and himself, in his essence he is an amateur. Shakespeare was one, for he wrote with leisured thought even in a hurly-burly, and gave a beauty to his page that the stage did not demand. With the depth of Hamlet gone, the crowds upon the Bank would have been undiminished merely for its melodrama and its ghost. Commercially, whole speeches of philosophy were wasted. It was his lonely thoughts he gave the public, and at most he spiced them here and there with common things to catch its vulgar eyes. To think otherwise is to deify a riffraff out of London who crossed the river to bait the bears. Take them as you will, our great writers, even when starvation gnawed upon them, were amateurs and in their work they sought their clamoring ideal.

New York is professional. Its writers meet demand—with better purpose when it pays, with lowered aim when the purchase of a larger crowd is needed. Litera-

ture sits obsequient in the shadow of a vast business that gives itself to mass production, and it has taken contamination from its methods. Success, by New York's definition, is the piling of edition upon edition, until the volumes pour upon the country like the packages of breakfast food whose methods of distribution they emulate. Gutenberg must turn within his grave at the thought of the modern press. Our Frankenstein has nourished a monster that now devours our art.

Gone is the leisure of the coffeehouse. There is now a hurried hour for lunch, with a watch held against a last remaining bite. Gone are the golden hours of night, for copy must be ready for the midnight press so that murder shall not wait. Gone the theater of words, lost in electric pageant and the scampering of pink legs. The essay has become a timely article served raw in haste. The novel is disordered sex, for that is what the crowd demands. There are jingling verses in the column, but no creative thought.

New York is the market and it must play safe for increase of sales. It must lay out wares that are in style. Even when it seems to direct our taste, it turns its ear to the tramp of feet, to be sure that the procession of a million readers follows to its noisy band. Its very circumstance that makes for a quick success may turn a man from the lonely ideal that marks genius. New York is a classroom whose curriculum is tinged with the demands and conditions of the market.

"Are you asleep, George?" I asked.

"Oh, so happy," he murmured. "Keep on, and let me dream."

New York dictates too much by what road a writer must travel. It is scornful of one who refuses the signboards of the highroad and takes a path of inclination. I myself recall the persuasion of an editor to turn me from essays into fiction. His argument was numbers and money profit. Why turn against a stream, he urged, that bore one on an easy current to success?

"Bbbiiirrrhhh," said George.

New York's attitude is that of a milliner. For any given season of this interesting commodity a style is fixed; a little basket now without a handle—to be altered perhaps by the time this book is published—a little basket that rests blindly on the nose. Did the milliner select broad brims to dress his window he would be left without a customer. And the novel, which bids for widest sale, is determined by as sure a mandate. We have seen a dozen fashions rise and fall—the cloak and dagger sort, the traffic in white slaves, the romance of open spaces, the protest of flaming youth. And these fashions impel a novelist, if he would bid for wealth. Cloak and dagger are gone. White slaves have departed like last year's snow, and like that snow they were dirty when the fashion melted.

The editor of a New York monthly periodical has told me of a popular author who had made a fortune in stylish salacious plots, but who chose later to snap his fingers at further profits and take up at last the abandoned ideal of his better youth. Will he succeed? I asked. No, was the answer. His ideal now can be but a memory without vitality. He has dipped his pen in filth too often. Nor would any fraction of his public,

fostered so carefully in dirt, turn with him to a new endeavor. As for the better public he never reached, his old reputation would withhold them. But whether he succeed or not, the point is this: For twenty years he had written books that were foreign to his inclination, to meet fashion and prodigious sale; and we deal again with the symbol of the dyer's hand that takes its color from its trade and must always show the stain.

It was once thought that hack writers wrote always in an attic and ate cold crust. Now, under a contract more generous, they have moved to luxury and a window on the boulevard.

The offers of mass production are so enormous. A certain writer has published three books of unpleasant but amazing excellence, and each of them required two years. And then for a fourth volume, for he was popular and profitable, he was offered in advance before a word was written twenty-five thousand dollars for periodical rights alone, if only he would fit his story to the editor's policy. So he wrote the book in two months and took his money.

When America is so comfortable and prosperous who shall say that taste declines? Never has the machinery of education been so perfect—college, library, opera, books and pictures. Culture is within the reach of everyone—we need hardly lift a finger—and the number of devotees grows each year. Never has the world been so exposed to opportunity. Yet we teach letters to breed the cheaper magazines, music to feed our jazz, drama to fill the movie houses, and painting to advertise our products on vast billboards. Craftsman-

ship with loftier purpose is lost in mass production whose profane temple is New York.

I am writing this in a hotel whose clientele has had sufficient advantage and money—a quiet crowd that is not newly rich. But at our magazine stand, the sale of Big Bertha from Philadelphia is greater than the sales of all other periodicals together. There are movies of an evening. Last night it was Up in Mabel's Room, and before that Getting Gerty's Garter. These, of course, as you will say, are the products of Hollywood. But Hollywood is New York's suburb, merely its factory where there is better sunlight for its pictures. The Jewish producers of Times Square have commuted west.

Editors cater to the public, and success is measured by their shrewdness. To this problem they fetch their accountants and auditors, and literature rests upon their balance sheet. When these editors shop for wares, they train their influence on the writers at their disposal to swerve them to their purpose. If this persuasion lies toward a writer's inclination and his ability, little harm is done. But often he is sold to mediocrity.

"Bbbiiirrrhhh," said George.

I have a man in mind whose start held every promise of achievement, whose early books were marked by beauty, whose pen was touched with fancy. But his profitable persuasion was toward stories in which wantonness peeped through a virtuous gauze. This is an antique device, as old as Pamela and older still,—modesty struggling with vice partly for her own safety perhaps, but chiefly for the seduction of the reader.

These stories purport to be treatises of morality, but their sale mounts in the degree that their plots are spiced. This writer has now been in leash for a dozen years. In one of his recent stories a moral pair of frilled pajamas loud with virtue was the heroine; and although the merit of the book was slight, there was now and then a touch of beauty that lingered pathetically from the promise of the author's youth.

I know another writer who, under a dozen different names, writes for one of those periodicals that purport to be true confessions and sell in millions. Every month he is a dozen ladies in distress—half the bulk of each issue—and yet he is a fellow of good education and high ideals who merely meets a great city's demand for suggestive thrill.

But in justice to these powerful editors it is only fair to say that with but a few exceptions their aim is clean rather than salacious. They want stories of successful salesmanship, of promotion, of getting a bank account with a bit of love thrown in. They teach the running of our national machine of progress. Their fiction is descended from the tale of the honest apprentice who did not run away to sea; but slept under the counter, took down the shutters, kept shop and married at last his master's daughter to be happy ever after. They are as moral as the library of a Presbyterian Sunday School.

But however clean, these editors hit for the level of mediocrity so that a host of readers will skim them on the train or in the sleepy hour after dinner before jazz begins upon the radio. They must not be so excellent

as to chill the lazy million, or so void of merit as to sicken a common understanding. In short, they must hit the average man, in order that their sales will run big and, of a consequence, that motors, vacuum cleaners and pancake flour will advertise. And the greater the sale and the bulk of advertising, the more they will pay their servant writers and the more effectively they will command mediocrity. So the vicious circle is completed, and the longest guns are not allied with beauty, or depth of thought, or with originality, or strength. For when a writer shows signs of popularity and is worthy of attack, he must be of stout courage when Big Bertha booms on Saturday. To such small fellows as myself they do not offer temptation. We are game too slight. We laugh at scars who have never felt a wound.

Writers are not alone in this temptation. The artist shares his danger. Painters were once the hirelings of a despot to decorate his palace walls. But in our more exacting feudalism they play serf to Mr. Goodrich and his rubber tires. The creature of their brush selects a Camel. They give themselves to a national product whose central office is in New York. For these products the great magazines have turned themselves wholly to commerce. They are fields of trade. Fiction trickles through the center of this field, on whose slight craft we float to behold the mighty billboards that flank the margin. It is small wonder that we look first at the billboards. They at least are drawn with undisguised intention and with skill, for advertising space is too expensive to be wasted.

Such impulsion is not, of course, confined to the resident of Manhattan. A man may be a hack anywhere and sell himself for profit. But if he lives far

Writers need more stool and birch

from the market he is less likely to be forced by its influence. He will meet rejection through a longer period, and yet he will be free. Nor is it unlikely, inasmuch as American writers have notoriously a need of

better craftsmanship, that a long school of rejection is what they most require. Bliss Perry, once editor of the Atlantic Monthly, has said this somewhere. Writers, he remarked, need more stool and birch. And surely it is well, if a man's fame shall ripen slowly.

Talent, of course, works anywhere. There are fewer mute inglorious Miltons than we might suppose. The circumstance of life must be very harsh to block the path entirely. And these marked abilities need not therefore expose themselves to greed. Craftsmanship, freedom, a background of seasoned knowledge, and an ideal that nourishes the heart and brain! Which of these is native to the turmoil of the booths where men cry out their wares?

"It is nearly noon," said Collins. "Shall I waken the ancient cyclist and stand him on his legs?"

"Not yet," I answered, "for I have more to say."

New York City is the center for young writers from uncongenial villages who have flocked in filled with rosy hopes of fame and fortune. Their youth and bubbling spirits are delightful. They own tall ink bottles and colored fountain pens. They wear loose ties in order that they may plumb the depths of poesy.

But in most cases they have nothing to write about. Some of them attempt to repair their ignorance by sampling life—too often a hazardous path beyond the border of decent convention. Some of them, again, believe that they should write only on the impulse of inspiration, and consequently they idle through many days awaiting the perfect hour. One to another they comfort themselves through lazy weeks. If no bright

thought assails their pencil, they hope for another morning to plant the seed of masterpiece. And so they loiter in an easy school where perseverance is not taught. Except for the complaisance of their association, rejection of their work would drive them to a better livelihood, and bad writers might become middling merchants. And by and large, it may be said that the ranks of the writers are too full. A shrewd selection at the top would yield in its smaller output a finer crop of books.

And some of them, again, set out frankly to meet the conditions of the market. Most of these, you may be sure, sink to the lowest level of its demand. Where a brain can coin both brass and gold, it is the cheaper money that finds its way to circulation. In political economy there is some such law as to fiat money. They write beauty hints, cribbed paragraphs on the care of children, household advice, counsel to the lovelorn—all the stuffing of an evening sheet.

It is my observation that beauty hints are written by young women of twisted stockings and mussy hair, that the governance of children is composed by those who have no families and have left their husbands, that household decoration is designed in the filthy confusion of an office, that the happy philosophy of an evening paper is painful hack work that stretches after midnight. I sat lately at dinner next to a young lady fresh from high school who as Mother Sophie offered professional advice to young mothers. I have had lunch with a beauty expressionist whose own complexion needed mending. Last summer I crossed the ocean with one

of our happy philosophers, and he confided to me his nights of drudgery while he could throw together enough copy to permit his escape to Europe. Our ship sailed at five in the morning and he came aboard at three, having completed the last page of an article on leisure and contentment.

There is value, I suppose, in the excitement of New York. It is training such as a newspaper gives. It

Beauty hints are written by young women of twisted stockings

teaches adaptability and speed. Yet one may stay in its influence too long, until its necessary glibness drives out those deeper qualities that lie at the heart of literature.

Nor is New York free from insularity. It is too sure it is all America. It takes too seriously the country's tribute. Its favored authors gather at little tables with persuasion that their horizon marks the universe.

They think they create opinion, when they do but pass an echo around the board. They pat one another too sweetly with commendation. And where every back needs scratching, here is a circle which makes it handy.

And we find other disadvantage if too many writers seek New York. A man usually writes best of an environment that he knows from long acquaintance, and in the main his subject and characters must come from the place he calls his home. The merit of our American books should be their diversity, a largeness to equal our width of border. America is not England. London, perhaps, is England; but New York is not America. Its very size, its variety of race, its diverse inheritance, its range of dissimilar thought and work, require writers accustomed to each condition. It is not that a man should of necessity stay at home to write. It is better if now and then he get off a bit for a clearer vision of the whole. But he should not crowd into Greenwich Village, lest he behold his vision not in a manner peculiar to himself, but leveled to commerce and the common eye.

"Food," said Collins.

Nor should association with other writers be held too high. Writing deals with all phases of life. It is the narrowness of writers, as with musicians, which makes them run together. It is for comfort rather than advantage. As for the stimulus I have mentioned, it is the novice who deplores his stupid and unsympathetic circumstance. Were his own sympathies broader he would find incitement in any gathering. And if a dozen writers come to borrow, there may be none who

lend. The novice may find himself, as it were, in that prosperous society where everyone made a living by taking in his neighbor's wash.

"Food," repeated Collins.

And so I think that a writer should not crowd the market place. While his book goes forward there should be no thought of sales, no hint of what the buyers want, no end in view but the satisfaction of an ideal. He should write of things before his door; or, at choice, invade the kingdom of his fancy. And if this is his desire, let him recall what seems a truth—that to a man whose habit is not competitive a finer vision may decline the crowded streets and the noisy shout of buyers.

George had awakened.

"It is sweet," he said, "to hear you revile New York. It came o'er my ear like the sweet sound that breathes upon a bank of violets."

"Food," said Collins.

We rose stiffly from the grass and pedaled on.

Leicester Hospital

CHAPTER XXI

WARWICK CASTLE, WITH A QUERRY WHERE THE FAMILY SITS ALL DAY

I talk but idly and you laugh at me.

WE entered Warwick by the West Gate. And here, just inside the town, we laid our bicycles against a fence for a look at Leicester's Hospital, whose buildings mingle with the gate tower and butt upon the street.

It seems that in the reign of Richard II the United Guilds of St. George and the Holy Trinity were founded,

and on four priests was set the task of saying mass for the King, his wife, for the Earl of Warwick and for the souls of Edward III and the Black Prince. In the reign of Henry VI these present buildings were erected to hold the guilds. Some years after the dissolution of religious houses, Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, came into possession. And here he created a home for old soldiers, or, in default of these in Warwick, for the worthy poor in the villages roundabout.

In this purpose Leicester Hospital persists today, but the lowland wars against the Spanish are now replaced by the Sudan and South Africa. Priority of compaign must furnish the ground of caste, and if any veteran survives the Indian Mutiny his nose is stiff against the mere hero of the Cape. When a few old fellows are laid away, it will be the Dardanelles and Argonne that give the evening gossip.

One forgets bare history. But the buildings of Leicester Hospital are so crowded with mellow rooms and courts, so hung with mementos, so sweet with present charity, that it is a wise sixpence that taps for entrance. An old soldier led us about through refectory and kitchen, hall and storage room, to the chapel which rises above the town gate, and at last to the battlements on the outer walls.

Then, at our request, he rapped at a private door, to show us a veteran's lodging that we might see how these pensioners lived. It was a small sitting room of homely furnishing and a brisk fire. The English never discard a tradition or a parlor ornament, and the pleasant clutter was of lineal descent from the Magna Carta.

The pensioner's wife admitted us, and she put her finger on her lips. Her husband, an old fellow of ninety-two, who had served in Afghanistan, lay ill within the inner bedroom. Each veteran has two rooms and a pantry. There is a common kitchen, and a cloistered garden with an arcade for rainy days. We stroked the cat and tiptoed out.

It now seemed necessary to see Warwick Castle.

"Food," said Collins.

"Duty first," we urged.

Char-à-bancs and private motors, picture-card venders and tourists, were clattering at the entrance.

England has endured many assaults but, since the Norman, none till now has really made a successful landing. Not even Napoleon could plant his guns on the sands of Pevensey. French and Italian restauranteurs, it is true, have for these many years made a foreign spot of Soho; but, although they have laid a hot barrage of omelet and spaghetti against the cold walls of English mutton, their triumph is but local. But now at last, when for a thousand years powder and ball have failed, horn glasses and Baedeker sweep the country. If only Napoleon had broken his regiments into twos and threes, if William of Germany had bought strip tickets for his lady teachers, history might have been quite different. How futile is the pother over navies and air defense, when invasion under Captain Cook sneaks so easily past a harbor mine!—all side trips paid, the Tower and Kenilworth, best hotels, running water, outside rooms, select company, no extras except wine at table.

And how can the English really like us when we crowd their countryside, seize the best of inns, pound the piano with our jazz and praise their villages with lofty condescension? The American school teacher on her travels is more deadly than the Dane. Her inclusive expense is five dollars a day, no tips, and she is frank with disapproval of foreign customs. Our Napoleons of finance shoot with golden bullets. The English, on their holidays, must go remotely to the continent to escape our barrage of crockery bathtubs, of corn on cob, of central heat and larger locomotives. Some day in a peaceful English village there will be a pogrom, and a char-à-banc will run back to London wrapped in crêpe.

Warwick Castle used to be one of the most interesting places of all England. Its legends run back to Roman days—to Cymbeline and the heroes that slew giants. But it was Æthelfleda, the daughter of King Alfred, who gave Warwick its first importance by living here. The high mound that still exists within the inclosure of the walls has been ascribed to her, but is now believed to have been the earliest fortification of the Normans. The castle itself, but of this no part remains, was first built by William the First when he marched north from Senlac. Of the buildings now existing the earliest are of the late thirteenth century; and Guy's tower and Cæsar's tower are from the latter part of the fourteenth.

Warwick Castle was destroyed in the Barons' War of Simon de Montfort, and rebuilt in the reign of Edward I. Piers Gaveston, the worthless favorite of

Edward II, was found guilty of treason here and was executed near by. By marriage Warwick came to the Nevilles, of whom the greatest was Richard, the king-maker. This and more—for the chronicles of Warwick are almost the history of England in those early centuries.

Its legends run back to Roman days

The castle sits in a lovely garden. It offers Norman tower and Tudor windows that look broadly on woods and meadow land. The shallow Avon flows at the base of a mighty cliff whose crest stretches upward into walls and battlements. There are trees and lawn, flowers and peacocks, a gallery of paintings, armor and the trophies of English wars. And Warwick, moreover,

has the humanizing advantage of present occupancy. But too many tourists infest the spot, and the castle's charm is endangered in a general picnic.

I wonder where the family sits all day. The tourists gather at ten o'clock, and after that there can be little privacy. An Englishman's home may be his castle, but his castle can hardly be his home in the tourists' open season. The family must take to safety and barricade the rooms above. At this minute, as we are entering the grounds, the Countess may be peeping through the muslin of an upper window, quite banished from her drawing-room. The hospitality of the Medici, although justly famous, hardly reached the man upon the street, and I doubt whether Nero took his fiddle upstairs in order that provincials might wander all day around his sitting room.

Are the rugs of Warwick laid in place at night, the furniture reset for family use, the rails and ropes removed? Is the daily disorder corrected when the whistle blows? It must take patience to be an earl. Suppose he has left his pipe on the breakfast table, or his slippers in the armory. One can see the dear fellow in hasty bathrobe and a coronet slinking down the scullery stairs, like a plainer man whose wife has callers, —swooping at his pipe and swishing off before he's caught. These things must be annoying.

Some fine morning his patience, long subdued, will break restraint. The hot blood of the Kingmaker, that has run pink so long, will now curdle black. When the suave butler tries at ten o'clock to shoo him into retirement and set the ropes as usual, then will the mad-

dened Earl dash upward to the battlements and pour hot oil on the gathering assault below. Earls should be given vacations in hotels now and then to reduce the pressure of their ancient blood, and be allowed to sit all day just where they please. If any of them grows sullen he should be tested for his sanity, for lunacy would sweep to death a dozen tourists in their eager quest for foreign culture.

George and Russell enlisted for the assault, but I was a veteran of many battles, so I wandered by myself out through the gardens. As I came up to the house of the Greek vase, the old custodian started to drone his story. I had heard it before, so I tried to stop him; for he looked like the kind of man who has a granddaughter of whom he would rather talk. But he met my question with a stiff eye, and continued his patter.

So I went outside the pavilion and sat on a bench that commanded a long green vista to a patch of flashing water. An old woman was weeding a bed of flowers and singing to herself, so I listened for the words.

> The shoes and stockings in the ———
> And the ——— all over the floor.

The words I have marked with dashes were so mumbled I could not catch them, yet she seemed to be describing a domestic disorder beyond the common. Where really would one expect to find the shoes and stockings, if the blank were all over the floor? Newspapers that print little puzzles for an intellectual evening, may use this rebus if they wish. Must I suppose that the old weed puller sang of her master, the Earl?

Perhaps the ropes in the armory have got to his brain at last. Was his lordship's daintiness loosened by hard drink? Or was the Countess in her cups?

She moved off to other weeds, and her mystery persists forever.

Tourists, most of them Americans, walked by in little groups. They proceeded with determined air straight to the pavilion of the Greek Vase, and they left briskly on a schedule. Another sight had been checked off. Most of them were school teachers and these kept a faithful thumb in their guidebooks. On Mondays next winter they will speak before the church club.

I met a lady tourist once in Switzerland who carried in an extra bag the ashes of her husband. It seems that the good man's health had broken in the furious speed, and he had died. But as the strip tickets were good for two, they still made the rounds together. I have no doubt but that the melancholy grip got its window seat as per agreement.

A young lady stood behind a Warwick tree to adjust a garter; but her modesty was affectation, for the exposure was no greater than in any gust of wind. For, as a friend of mine remarks, a knee is now nothing but a joint. Peacocks strutted about. The far-off water sparkled in the noonday sun. The trees murmured of better days before the castle had yielded to assault.

We had lunch at the Warwick Arms. I had stopped there several years before, and it had been a picturesque little inn. I remember chiefly a snug tap whose walls were hung with pewter, now swept into a general lounge

for motorists. And I recall a sitting room where, before a weazened fire on a rainy September night, I had once discussed theology with a priest from London.

He was a Catholic of the English variety that denies allegiance to Rome. To him the Pope had been but a usurping bishop—an upstart from purer days—and I recall how he had urged the apostolic succession of the English see. And we had discoursed of heretics. It was his enforced vacation from his brotherhood in London—two weeks of penance denied the slums of the lower Thames—and he fretted to return. There was something in the man of the youthful Loyola, and he was to me a stranger from both a holier and a harsher world. And in the morning when I set out for Stratford, the priest had walked for a mile with me to insist upon a point of doctrine which he had neglected the night before.

And I remembered of the Warwick Arms that certain corridors upstairs had wandered like a nightmare in the dark with ghosts that ran before my candle, and that a bedroom looked upon a stable yard before the last horse died.

But the Warwick Arms is now enlarged to accommodate a crowd of motorists. The pewter is gone, the candles and the priest. If there is talk of an evening it is of miles and speed and distance, of liquor for the asking. At lunch we met several of these modern Jutes, and they confided to us how they had ravaged England.

"All of it," they said. "In two weeks. Edinburgh and everything. A spry little Buick. Where do you think we were last night?"

I couldn't guess.

"Windermere. Prefer Lake George. Hotel not much. London tonight. We've kept the little engine busy."

"And where then?" I asked.

"France. Two weeks. Is that enough? Can we see it all?"

"There's not a doubt of it," I answered.

We were hardly on our way from the Warwick Arms, when George spied a sampler in a window.

"Hoy," he called.

He was already bulging as with a strange dropsy of the hip, but in he went. The sampler was nailed in a heavy frame. So George took off his coat, called for a clawhead hammer, and set to work with the energy of a man who pulls rivets from a ship. The family had gathered, and they pushed forward spinning wheels and highboys to temp him further.

Some day George will tour England with a moving van.

He folded the sampler into added dropsy, and we left the shop for Kenilworth.

Let virtue be my greatest care
And study my delight.
So still my day be always fair
And peaceable my night.
Polly Hopkins' Sampler
wrought in the 12 year of her age,
in the year of Our Lord 1828

Full many a glorious morning have I seen

CHAPTER XXII

RETROSPECT

Full many a glorious morning have I seen
Flatter the mountain tops with sovereign eye.

I WALKED once many years ago to Kenilworth in early morning, and I recall the cattle that grazed in sparking meadows, the birds on garden walls, and a sweet aroma on the wind as if nature turned a furrow in the dawn. Mist still slept in the folding of the hills, a laggard from the swift retreat of night.

And now those morning vapors are banished from the actual earth, to hang as a veil across the memory and half reveal two lads who walked in England—who ran a mile in sheer necessity of spirit, who slept on the grassy top of Kenilworth or dropped stones whose

counted seconds judged the height, who lounged in taverns and sweated in the sun, who plodded all the day to Coventry and back to sleep that night at Warwick like beggars in Elysium. They bathed their feet where water sang to shallow stones, they stood tiptoe to see beyond a hedge, they pelted up a hill to face the adventure of a new horizon.

This road to Kenilworth was a golden morning in the dawn of life. Here was a pounding of thoughts unrealized, dreams that broke through language and escaped, beauty that needed still the whip of practice. The furnace of youth burns hot; but when the persevering years have taught their lesson, the smithy's fire is fallen into ash and the dull hammer of maturity taps coldly on resisting metal.

Every writer who matures late must speculate on those unrecorded hours and regret that youth's fast candle burned to socket. The leisure of an hour was endless, for Time had not learned to trot and its vista looked forever on beckoning paths. Impressions were so vivid then, the brain unhampered by its load of years, the tablets of the mind so clean for message. Yet joy stuttered when it spoke, and fell to silence. Or if by chance the lad put his fancies down and made verses or a story—manuscripts now lost—he deals kindly with them in faded memory. Nothing he has written since has been composed with such a burning pen, and he feels that those pages of the past are his nearest approach to the true record of his heart.

For myself, I wrote a story once at Heidelberg. The great tun was in its plot, and the king's jester was its

hero. This and that happened in a dungeon, with secret schemes how a lady might be sold in marriage. To aid these dark threats, she was imprisoned in a tower of narrow window where but a slit of sky could peep upon her sorrow. And now an old woman, suspected of commerce with the devil, came to her at twilight, whispering how youth, also, might make itself a witch—how it might leap from the battlements and fly to safety on a broomstick. It was an older age that believed these things, and so she jumped at midnight. And the shadow of a cloud moved upon the trees far across the valley, and seemed to be the lady in her flight. So the jester sang his merriest song, which the years recorded as a dirge.

While this fermented in my brain, I had wandered in the castle's moonlit garden. I had haunted the terrace to watch the ghosts that paraded on the walls. I too saw shadows on the battlements and witches in the drifting clouds. My ecstasy was half in fright. And now, even in the thought of the twinkling lights that strewed the valley, some touch of youth returns and my pen runs fast to throw its noose upon the glittering dream.

Yesterday, on this present trip to Kenilworth, our company was five instead of three; for the lads I had forgotten went along with us, and it was their eyes that saw the meadows of grazing cattle now drowsy in the afternoon.

We turned down a lane to Guy's Cliff

CHAPTER XXIII

MEMORY IS OUR TOURIST HERE

In me thou see'st the twilight of such day
As after sunset fadeth in the west.

IT is said that two Englishmen once laid a bet between them as to which was the prettiest road seen on their travels. One of them put his money on Kenilworth to Warwick, and the other risked his on Warwick to Kenilworth. So each was forced to applaud the other's taste and call the wager void. The quiet of this highway is now somewhat soiled with motors. Yet if one will turn his back upon the traffic and bargain for rolling hills and meadows, he may still spend his time with profit.

In a mile or so, at a post-card booth, we turned down a lane to Guy's Cliff, where the fabled Guy of Warwick lived—a giant of eight feet (his height, dear reader, for even giants were bipeds)—who, by tradition, could throw an ox. Legend mentions his "armour, his statue, his porridge pot, and his faithful Phillis." But he is a myth like Old King Cole with his fiddlers three, and he need not trouble us outside the nursery. He is, moreover, a stock giant, and is carted here and there as legend needs him. Wherever deeds of strength crop out they are laid to Guy of Warwick, just as we today fit all humorous anecdotes on some distinguished wit.

The chapel at Guy's Cliff was rebuilt in the reign of Henry VI from an older chantry of God knows when, and the mill beside the river claims a trace of Norman work. But most of what we see is modern, for the great house was not erected until the latter half of the eighteenth century. Leland traveled this way in the reign of Henry VIII. It was "an abode of pleasure," he wrote, "a place meet for the Muses, with its natural cavities, its shady woods, its clear and crystal streams, its flowering meadows, and caves overgrown with moss. . . ." The present house, however, built since his visit, requires a new description.

It sits back across the mill pond with rather a haunted air, as if it waited all the day for night. It may be occupied, yet its windows seem empty and I must believe that footsteps in a hallway would echo with chilly resonance.

And I think it is usually these eighteenth century houses that ghosts affect. Gothic and Norman are too

highly prized, too swept and dusted, to be let to vagrant tenants. Their halls are railed and barricaded against the procession of both this world and the next. It is these later buildings, too fussy with Italian ornament to suit our present taste, that fall to the dilapidation that ghosts require; and at the family's death their title passes to the graveyard. Here at Guy's Cliff there must be much stalking in the moonlight.

Or perhaps I see these walls with the eye of thirty years ago, when youth required the supernatural.

Sarah Kemble, to be later the great Siddons and the tragic muse of London, was once, when young, a lady's companion here; and one feels that her genius, fretted by this trivial occupation, has left its stamp on these sober walls. If memory serves me right, she first appeared at Drury Lane as Lady Macbeth—a hasty substitute with but a night to memorize the lines—and Guy's Cliff seems a fitting prologue to a somber curtain.

But perhaps any house is melancholy if its broken outline falls across a mill pond rippled only by a fallen leaf. For silent water, denied the hills, offers its leisure to sad reflection.

There is something unreal about Guy's Cliff, as one sees it from the mill. It seems a painted drop for a tragic play, and I doubt if the building is actually in three dimensions. If one entered, he might find himself in a back-stage litter where scenery struts are screwed against the floor and actors await their cue. It did not occur to us to demand admission. Aladdin's audience out in front would as soon clamor for entrance inside the flat canvas of his enchanted castle.

There is something unreal about Guy's Cliff

Or if the building be conceived as real, the heroines of Horace Walpole might live here, together with the clanking chains that infest those dull old thrillers.

The house is a legend, the pond a myth, the mill wheel but a dream. Even the Avon—no, that, at least, is real, for I touched my finger to its chilly water. But if Warwick is staled by too familiar steps, Guy's Cliff is not; for tourists must look upon it from a distance. And the stream, broiling downward in the valley, halts at the edge of the pond as if its holiday were also checked before these silent walls. There were five of us who watched the swirl of leaves upon the pond.

Somewhere hereabouts upon the road we passed a house on which a signboard informed us that Piers Gaveston was executed for treason.

Just before coming to Kenilworth a stream flows across the road and we splashed through without dismounting. For this was like coming on a friend. For on that day of thirty years ago those lads had cast off shoes and stockings here to rest their feet in running water. And they had sat for beer in a near-by tavern that I still recall as the Green Man, before they trotted on to Coventry. That bitter beer is sweet. And I recall that a countryman had stopped them to inquire whether they had seen his missing beastie which, it appeared, was a cow that he had lost.

So all the way to Kenilworth I traveled in sentimental recollection, until the road rounded through a meadow and the old walls stood up to greet us. And when at last we had climbed a ruined tower to rest on an ancient window seat, I still looked upon the scene with the eyes

of a schoolboy whom I had once known and quite forgotten.

Two events account for the tourists' interest in Kenilworth. The first of these was the progress of a queen. For in 1575 the Earl of Leicester, then its owner, invited Elizabeth up from Windsor and offered her a pageant of such cost and glitter that the legend of it still remains.

The Queen's journey to Kenilworth reads like the transport of an army, and its record is full of instructions to each town that she be served suitably "of beeves, muttons, veales and lambs . . ." Wines came from city vintners, and "if the ale of the country," we are informed, "will not please the Queen, then it must come from London or else a brewer to brew the same in the towns near." Letters were sent to the bakehouses on the road with requisition for fresh bread. The salvo of arms that greeted her at the gates of Kenilworth was heard for miles. We may be sure that Elizabeth permitted Leicester to bear the expense.

She was entertained for seventeen days "with excessive cost," says Dugdale, "and Variety of delightful Shows." At her first entrance (but I hope they gave the dusty old thing an hour to wash) she saw "a floating stand upon the Pool, bright blazing with Torches, upon which were, clad in Silks, the Lady of the Lake and two Nymphs waiting on her, who made a speech to the Q in Meeter of the Antiquity & Owners of that Castle, which was closed with Cornets, & other loud Musick. . . . And for the several Dayes of her Stay, various and rare Shews & Sports were there exercised,

viz., in the Chase a Savage Man, with Satyrs; Bear-Baitings, Fire-Works, Italian Tumblers, a Country Brideale, with running at the Quinton, & Morrice-Dancing. And, that there might be nothing wanting that these Parts could afford, hither came the Coventre-Men, & acted the antient Play, long since used in that City, called Hocks-Tuesday, setting forth the Destruction of the Danes in King Ethelred's Time. . . ."

And Pomona gave Elizabeth fruit, Bacchus gave her wine, there was a handsome offering of fish from Neptune. Triton sat on a mermaid. Arion rode a Dolphin. Three hundred and twenty hogsheads of beer were drunk, and a good time was had by all.

But this entertainment would be still in the limbo of scholars' brains, if in 1815 a lame man had not come to Kenilworth and been "alone in the ruins some two hours." This was Walter Scott, and he gathered material for his story of Leicester and Amy Robsart. Without these two events Kenilworth would not be today on the dusty track of tourists. For its walls were much battered in the battles of the Commonwealth, and there are other English castles of as sharp a history and of greater beauty.

Yet Kenilworth in its start was Norman. John of Gaunt lived here, and Henry III. It was Simon de Montfort's fortress in the Barons' Wars. Lancaster's buildings are of the fourteenth century, and the great hall is slightly later. This is seen from the cellar, for its floor is gone, nor is there a roof.

We sat for an hour at Kenilworth—half the time that Scott required. There were still five of us, but two

alone saw the tower where Amy Robsart lodged so many years before, the broken window from which she had watched Leicester at the feast. No one now reads Kenilworth. Its people are too stiff and artificial. It is a book for youth alone, whose glamor blinds the eye.

Scott saw the castle again in 1828, seven years after Kenilworth was published, and even in so short a time a popular interest had been created to preserve it from further demolition. "The relentless rain only allowed us a glimpse of this memorable ruin," he writes. "Well, the last time I was here, in 1815, these trophies of time were quite neglected. Now . . . they are, in short, preserved and protected. So much for the novels."

When Leicester contrived his entertainment for the Queen, Shakespeare was eleven years of age. As Stratford was but a few miles down the road, he may have heard the guns as she approached. Nor can it be doubted that he trudged from school for an excitement that must have been the sharpest of his boyhood. One wonders whether this glimpse of a world unknown—seen, perhaps, from a tree or across a wall (for lads since time began have never needed tickets to a circus)—was not remembered in later days to send him out of Stratford to seek his fortune. And when as a famous poet he was summoned to Hampton Court to play before the Queen, did he not tell her how he saw her first unbidden from among the shoulders of the crowd?

In the Midsummer-Night's Dream there are certain verses that recall the pageantry of gods that waited on

Elizabeth at Kenilworth, and they support the chronicler's description of Triton on a mermaid's back.

> . . . once I sat upon a promontory,
> And heard a mermaid on a dolphin's back
> Uttering such dulcet and harmonious breath,
> That the rude sea grew civil at her song,
> And certain stars shot madly from their spheres,
> To hear the sea-maid's music.

We may suspect at least that the "certain stars shot madly" were Dugdale's fireworks.

> That very time I saw, but thou couldst not,
> Flying between the cold moon and the earth,
> Cupid all arm'd: a certain aim he took
> At a fair vestal throned by the west,
> And loos'd his love-shaft smartly from his bow,
> As it should pierce a hundred thousand hearts;
> But I might see young Cupid's fiery shaft
> Quench'd in the chaste beams of the wat'ry moon,
> And the imperial votaress passed on,
> In maiden meditation, fancy-free.

It was the fashion to play up the many assaults on the Queen's cold heart, and every gossip knew that Leicester had wished to marry her.

Scott has no room in his plot for this lad who saw the mermaid from the promontory (a hillside above the pool of Kenilworth) nor has Shakespeare left more than this one hint. For a more complete record of his holiday, we would gladly exchange Adonis and to the bargain add Lucrece. And all the following week, we

may be sure, bees droned by the sleepy windows of his class; for Gallic wars are pale beside the drums of Kenilworth.

The highway to Coventry has changed in these last few years. It was once a quiet country road, with great trees and softest grass where two boys rested and lay upon their backs to watch the clouds filter through the leaves. Once it echoed laughter and all the tunes of holidays—now "bare ruin'd choirs, where late the sweet birds sang."

It was almost dinner time when we came to the city whose church towers had guided us for many miles. At the hotel George was given what appeared at first to be a private dining room with a bed in one corner; but the table was the board on which salesmen displayed their wares, for we have come now to a town of commerce.

Collins and I had a room that looked out upon a building of the high street. And in the wall sat a Peeping Tom, gazing out forever to see if Lady Godiva rode again through Coventry.

Godiva went riding to promote a charity

CHAPTER XXIV

RAIN AT COVENTRY

I must attend time's leisure with my moan.

COVENTRY is a challenge to honesty. I could crib from a guidebook that it was founded by eleven thousand virgins from Cologne, that it was sacked by the Danes, that the Normans had not yet landed when Godiva went riding to promote a charity. In Shakespeare's Richard II, Bolingbroke and Thomas Mowbray fought at Gosford Green, now well inside the city. Elizabeth visited Coventry—and was it not this city's beer she drank on her journey up to Kenilworth? Mary, Queen of Scots, was briefly a prisoner here. At the time of the Gunpowder Plot, another Elizabeth, the daughter of King James (the lady who went to live at Heidelberg), was lodged in Coventry

for safety. The city took part in the Civil Wars and, because it refused entrance to Charles I, the second Charles who took so long a-dying destroyed its walls in vengeance. There are many souvenirs of these events —a Guild Hall, half-timbered buildings, and three churches whose spires may be seen for miles about.

There was once at Coventry a Franciscan monastery, now gone except for its spire and a bit of underpinning, and it was here that the most famous of the Coventry plays were acted—"with mighty State and Reverence," says Dugdale, "by the Friars of this House. . . ." And they "had Theatres for the several scenes," he continues, "very large and high, placed upon wheels and drawn to all the eminent parts of the City, for the better advantage of the spectators."

These plays bulk large in the history of the English drama. One may study their progress from religious chant to dialogue, from bare scripture into plot, from their staging near the church's altar to their release to the larger graveyard, to their secular appearance on the street. Their alliance with tumblers and singing clowns, with sleight of hand, with bears upon a rope, with inn yards and traveling wagons, with dogs and baited animals, with picnic and disorder, with poetry at last and Shakespeare, is the pretty chapter of the stage.

One can grub up on this from Chambers' massive volumes, but rain had drowned my ardor. It is pleasanter merely to hint that Hamlet's Herod rode around Coventry on a wastrel's cart, and that these plays that issued from a convent were a source of Elizabethan drama.

It was nearly dinner time when we came to Coventry.

"I wonder," said George, dismounting, "about those eleven thousand virgins from Cologne. It is their history that grips me most. Did any of them happen to be widows?"

"The development of the Christmas play," I urged, "the Quem Quiritis, with choristers dressed as inquiring shepherds at the tomb, is the first step of drama."

"And why Cologne?" said George.

"And when this was preceded by a visit to the apothecary's for oils and perfume, a plot was started."

But George shook me off.

We left our wheels in the garage and entered the hotel, while he still brooded.

The young lady at the desk watched us sign our names, together with such added information as the police require. Then she rang for the porter.

"Perhaps," said George, with an innocent smile, "perhaps you can tell me whether a considerable party of young women from Germany is staying here."

"What are their names?" asked the Y. L. A. T. D.

"Ah," said George, "that is what I hoped you would tell me."

"There's a motor salesman and his wife in twenty-one. And two American ladies traveling in a Morris-Cowley in sixty-four. All the rest are single commercial gentlemen."

"Nobody from Cologne?" persisted George.

She shook her head, and George followed the porter up a majestic Victorian staircase whose art was donated

by the Midland Railroad—a hint of sunny days around the Peak.

To an ignorant eye, unbeset by virgins from Cologne, Coventry will appear as a crowded little city that spends a sweaty day in the manufacture of cycles and motor cars. Its streets are filled with workmen with hands in their pockets, with cheap eating houses, with shops for the sale of blue shirts and overalls. It is a town of rooms to let, of convenient drink, of muddy gutters, of bad teeth and greasy finger nails.

It was raining when we pedaled into Coventry, but in a dubious rift of better weather we walked about the dreary town, too low in spirits to admire its famous sights. We got into the Guild Hall and out again, into a church and checked it off, through a park and down a dismal street. Adam must have had his moments in the rain when even Eden lost its charm.

Then we turned into a restaurant, where we shared a table with a silk salesman. Times were hard, he said. He had spent the morning unprofitably in Birmingham, and the afternoon in Coventry still without a sale. His specialty was silk lampshades, the tasseled kind that does so much to brighten England when it sits in a front window with an aspidistra. Children can strike the tassels with their thumbs, and be happy all the day without a nurse.

Was there a market, he asked, for something rather nobby of the sort in Canada? Nothing made a room so cozy as a tasseled lamp shade. Business was bad at home. So few people could afford one. America had all the money. He rapped his coffee cup upon the

bare table and ordered a sweet. Dead, that's what business was. Every shop overstocked—now, in June—with winter shades. No room for the summer fashions.

"What is the difference in lamp shades," I asked, "between January and July?"

That does so much to brighten England

"Difference!" he replied. "We bring out something new each season. Who wants fringe now? It's tassels, with parchment maps sewed on the silk."

"I know," I urged. "But just what—"

"My dear sir," he interrupted, "we're up to date. Progress, that's our motto. Something new and nobby."

I was silenced by his logic.

"America needn't boast," he added. "When trouble

in the mines is over, England will come back and show its heels to an upstart."

He buried his emotion in a sticky tart, which stuck upon his lip, and spoiled his eloquence. Burke's glittering phrase would fail, with exterior lunch unbrushed.

After supper we went to a picture, and on the way home crowded into a bar where two nimble girls were drawing and spilling beer. George pushed close among the thirsty patrons.

"*Sprechen sie deutsch?*" he asked.

"Light or dark?" she answered.

"*Sprech*—"

But he was met by a vacant stare.

"My error," said George, and he moved away. "By her soft blue German eye," he added, "I thought she might be one of them. But I suppose the virgins must all be old women now."

Peeping Tom was still intent upon the street when we went to bed, but his eye was faded with hope deferred.

It rained next morning, and there was a dirty drizzle in the gutters as if the water had done its best to scour the smoky sky but with poor success. And if nature really kept pace with progress (tassels!), she would lather her showers with soap before she poured them on a factory town. Pear should send a salesman up to Pluvius.

And now I sing once more with pathos of a hotel writing room, of stale periodicals and motor catalogues, of picture advertisements of whisky, of splashed windows, of Noah and ark and flood.

I soon retired to the bar, which was the least mournful spot of our hotel. And here presently George joined me. Our American classic, it seems, Gentlemen Prefer Blondes, has arrived in England; and a salesman leaned amorously on the wooden counter, jesting with a dark-haired girl who served the drink. She was a bouncing creature with challenging eye, and she

A rift of joy even in commerce

asserted that her weight was one hundred and twenty pounds; whereat the salesman offered to hold her on his knee and make a nearer guess. I find there is a rift of joy even in commerce.

"Scotch," said George, and we sat morosely at a table to endure an agony of hours.

Collins lay on a long bench, with his béret pulled down upon his nose.

It is a peaceful old town (pop. 8616)

CHAPTER XXV

TO LICHFIELD AND TAMWORTH, WITH A HINT AS TO WHEN CASTLES STAND ON THEIR HIND LEGS

What freezings have I felt, what dark days seen!
What old December's bareness everywhere!

THURSDAY, June thirtieth! I write the date, to convince a skeptic that it is summer. The sun peeped out toward noon, with watery eyes as if it wept for its behavior. But

The offender's sorrow lends but weak relief
To him that bears the strong offense's cross.

We ran for our wheels before the sun could change its mind. All afternoon we advanced through intermittent

showers. For the first hour our road was a thoroughfare toward Birmingham, and we were in a rush of motor trucks. Iron bounced from factory to warehouse, and Hovis bread seemed running everywhere. There cannot be much freight left for railway carriage. Half of the road was broken up for a new pavement, and these gasoline projectiles missed us by a foot and roared on with disappointment.

We lunched at Stone Bridge in a tavern which is too close to Birmingham to be recommended—disinfectants in the wash room, towels daubed with impressionistic art like some newer vogue among the painters. There was a weighing machine in the parlor, many tasseled tidies and an automatic piano loaded up with jazz. The house was orderly enough, but with a hint that Saturday would fetch a rowdy company. We ate mutton and the barren lettuce leaf.

A great city soils its suburbs, and we were glad to strike north off the highroad through quieter traffic and sloping meadows where the roar of wheels was but a distant murmur.

At Coleshill we were drenched in a sudden downpour. Yet this is a faint description of three sodden creatures, running like a tap. Collins at least got practice for a tank-drama, and needed only a drowning lady in his arms.

We dripped to an overhanging roof, then sought the parish church. Finding it locked, we stood in a village porch and watched the clouds sweep low across the spire. This is but a tiny town upon a hilltop with the city's buildings roughening the horizon, yet Birming-

ham was once described as a village that neighbored Coleshill. It is the nineteenth century and the use of steam that has shifted England. The great wheel of progress wobbles slightly on its newer hub.

And so through scattered showers to Tamworth.

It had been our intention to proceed to Lichfield for the night, but George had strained a propeller shaft in the heavy seas. On the bridge, therefore, that enters Tamworth we consulted a map. George dumped his bicycle into the gutter and leaned his stomach heavily against the rail.

"If there is no inn here," he said, "perhaps there is a graveyard handy. Either has its charm. I am an old man and it hardly matters if I am cheated of a year or two." And his lowering eye sought the stream below.

"Courage, companion," I answered. "See yonder castle that flouts the rainy clouds upon a hill. Where smoke issues from a chimney, there is warmth and hospitality inside."

'But I see no chimney and no smoke," said George, and his foot was already lifted across the rail.

"True," I answered.

So we consulted a map.

It appeared that the road to Scotland, if one would escape the Black Country with its looms and furnaces, discarded Lichfield here and struck to the northeast. Lichfield, therefore, was a luxury and not a necessity, for it lay distant a good eight miles that would need to be retraced.

So I proposed that we lodge George in a Tamworth

inn, where he might refresh himself with bar, bath and bed (the three B's of a tourist's convalescence), and that Russell and I proceed to Lichfield for the remnant of the afternoon and fetch back to him at dinner a faithful report upon its sights, its legends and its beauties.

George's face, at this offer of relief, was that of a child who gets a cooky. He gathered up his wheel, and we climbed into the town to an hostelry known as the Castle Inn, which George selected against a rival across the street for its row of friendly bottles in the window. Such relics, since the rise of Volstead, are quicker than any famous tomb to inspire a pilgrim's interest.

Presently we heard the splash of water in the tepid Tamworth tub and, leaving George as near to godliness as his base nature makes possible, we took the road to Lichfield.

It was eight o'clock when we returned, which is the hour of tavern dinners. We met George, polished like a bridegroom, gazing fondly at the outside bottles.

"Lichfield," I began, "is notable for its cathedral and its association with Dr. Johnson, who was born there and ran a school with Davy Garrick as a pupil. It is a peaceful old town (pop. 8616) whose inhabitants—"

"Stop!" said George. "You have cribbed that from a guidebook."

"Whose inhabitants," I continued, "were described by Johnson as the 'most sober, decent people in England.' "

'Baedeker," said George.

"There is a railroad station, a post office, a museum, a number of streets, a flock of houses, a church and the George Inn which is the scene of Farquhar's comedy, the Beaux' Stratagem."

"Which you have never read," George interrupted.

"True," I answered. "But I shall read it when the long nights of winter come. There is also a bronze plate that marks where Garrick lived, but to our regret we couldn't find it."

"What did you really see?" asked George. "Did you go to Lichfield, or did you sit under a hedge just around the corner and study the book?"

"Your suspicions," I replied, "merely reveal your own tricky nature. There is a cathedral, and it is dedicated to St. Mary and St. Chad."

"Who is St. Chad?"

"Ah, you thought you had me caught. You assumed I wouldn't know. He, or she, was a saint. A Catholic, no doubt. Dead, presumably. I prefer to think that he belonged to the sex that has a long white beard, that he leaned upon a crutch, that—"

It was Collins who interrupted. "He was a follower of St. Cuthbert," he said.

"Ah, George," I resumed, "you see how Russell, like little Rollo, has learned his lesson while you have merely slept in the suds. You remember Cuthbert, of course."

George's eye lighted. "Yes, I do," he answered. "There was a hymn about him:

> Cheer up, Cuthbert, you'll soon be dead.
> A short life, and a ggguuuyyy one.

I remember him in comic opera. I forget the name of it, but he was the jockey who was starved and melancholy. The merry-merry danced behind him."

"That was his nephew. The uncle was a monk. And many years ago, long before the Norman conquest, before even the days of samplers, he founded a monastery at Lindisfarne, which was a holy island off the coast of northern England."

"Do you know what Lichfield means?" asked Collins.

"It suggests to me a couple of liars," George replied. "Let's go in to dinner."

"It means a field of the dead. *Lich* is dead," Collins persisted.

"It's a jolly name for a city."

"St. Chad built a church at Lichfield," continued Collins, "and then he had a vision in which angels sang to him and called him up to heaven."

"What else did you see besides Chad and Cuthbert?" asked George with a sneer.

"Do you remember Johnson?" I asked.

"Ben or Sam?"

"Sam," said Collins. "It was on this road, right by this inn, that he and Garrick walked to London. Johnson carried with him the manuscript of Irene to get it played at Covent Garden or Drury Lane, and it bulged his pocket like your samplers. We went into the cathedral, but there was service and we were not allowed to walk about. We saw the house where Johnson lived. It is now a museum and some of the old furniture is left. And there are books, manuscripts,

souvenirs and pictures. But I got overstuffed, so I sat on the steps outside."

"I approve your diligence," said George. "Nor," he added, "have I been idle, as the wife with recent twins remarked to her husband returned from a two years' cruise. I have seen Tamworth Castle from foundation to battlement. I'll instruct you in its sights tomorrow morning."

"Food," said Collins.

For an hour after dinner we walked through dim streets, close-set, whose windows showed supper tables cleared and the master without his coat. There were no radios, and the only sound was our lonely feet upon the stones. A picture house burned a bigger light, but we declined its dingy invitation. Finally, when candles had gone to bed and twilight had pelted west, we came to the bridge below the inn where the castle tower rose vaguely in the mist.

In the upper wall, far above assault, are Tudor windows. These were cut later by several centuries than the tower's first construction, and they mark the time when conquest and the Barons' Wars had yielded to safer days, and ease and elegance came creeping in.

And were one's history quite forgotten, the slightest diligence would discover in the contrast between a lower cruel glissade and airy mullions up above how at last the centuries grew mild—how castles had become houses of country entertainment and had lost their strength as forts. The thickness of a wall and the width of a window are the measure of domestic peace. The rule may need modification in the south with its

glaring days of heat; but in the north, where the sun is needed, it is only safety that keeps a window narrow.

Architecture, despite its present advance to steel, is conservative. For old necessity, when its use is gone, lingers on as ornament. Crenelation—even the holes for boiling oil—persists in our latest churches, though safe from the assault of crowds. Walls are buttressed, when inside girders have removed the thrust that gave them once necessity. At St. John's, New York, there are flying buttresses that are sheer display, for a steel frame around the crossing has deprived them of an honest job. The modern cathedral at Liverpool is heaped with stone, when it is steel that holds the weight.

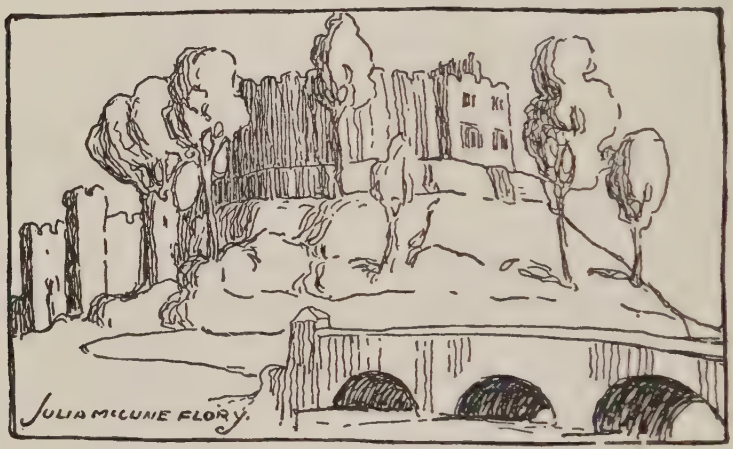
Or, if one will walk on an American street, he will see in ordinary houses arches and keystones made of wood with incised lines to look like stone; hollow columns pretending to be masonry, corbels that support nothing. Half timbering, once the necessary ribbing of a house, is now laid as a parasite flat against the plaster; and there are lines of vaulting where there is no vault. The series of imitation is endless. If a farmer puts a cupola upon his barn, it is of descent from early centuries when the smoke of a central fire escaped through a roof without a chimney.

But Tamworth is real, built before the days of sham. Its crenelation is for defense, its massive walls for use. Its lookout is against the enemy, and the narrow windows near its base are more than a pretty picture.

Yet Tamworth sleeps at noon, and it is not then that I offer it to tourists. We ourselves, as we pedaled in,

had hardly lifted our eyes to see it. A motorist would blink between his naps, or at most fumble his thumb inside a book to find a name that he would soon forget. Presently he would sink back among his cushions, and James would drive to Lichfield.

I am commonly disappointed in castles. So often one has seen them first on canvas or engraved in a book.



Tamworth sleeps at noon

And when at last they actually meet the eye, they are less steeply disposed upon the cliff. The noonday glance of travel falls short of the artist's picture. An engraving of Château Gaillard, for example, lifts it to a lofty mountain, yet it stands on a mere hill above the Seine. Turner's Scottish Castles must disappoint the tourist when he sees them stark and without a gorgeous sunset. But perhaps it is too much to ask an artist to journey with a yardstick.

Is it our lack of fancy that dwarfs reality? Or are

The castle stretches like a creature that has lain asleep

artists reckless builders, unfettered by a pay roll. Their penny's worth of paint builds too thriftily a battlement.

I had once an experience in point. Several years ago I wrote a story that concerned itself with Loches and its dungeon on a hill—a horrid prison where I locked my hero. And it was in the bargain with my publisher that there would be a picture of this castle in the book. It was when I fetched back the galley proof that I saw it. Loches was on a dizzy peak, like a larger hut on the Matterhorn.

How do you like it? I was asked. Lovely, I replied, but the mountain is too tall. There may be persons who have seen Loches, and know that an old lady could trot up the slope. A mountain of Central Park would be more nearly right.

So with Chinese white the eminence was scaled down ten thousand feet.

Or perhaps nature has its larger moments, and it is these that artists seize. For shadows lengthen in the twilight and the world grows large. Mist is a glass that magnifies the night. And shall not man's small contrivance thrive also in such company until the eye swells to catch its whole immensity?

It is in the dark that I offer Tamworth, for then its mound has grown to be a hill. And the castle also wakes and stretches like a creature that has lain asleep.

How like a crab she backs across the floor

CHAPTER XXVI

TAMWORTH, WITH A FEW REMARKS ON SCRUBBING BRUSHES

Give not a windy night a rainy morrow.

WE awoke next morning to the patter of rain. In English hotels it is usual to place the dresser squarely in the window—an awkward arrangement for it lessens the view and daylight. But now I understand the reason. As one lies in bed, low in spirit and dimly convalescent, the mirror shields him somewhat and breaks gently by degrees the horrid knowledge of another rainy day. It is bad enough without this added shock to awake to English coffee, which is a muddy drizzle in the best of sunlight.

I was on my hind legs, therefore, and wide awake, before I discovered on this particular morning that the puddles of the inn yard were pimpled again with show-

ers. A slinking cat ran delicately among them, shaking a paw when it touched the water.

"Look!" I said to Collins. "The long drought is broken. There is rain at last."

As we issued to the lobby, the general misery of a cold wet sky was heightened by a girl on her knees who scrubbed the floor—a pale slight thing with almost, if washed, a pretty face. Nor do I know of a gloomier task on a rainy day than scrubbing a floor that lies at best in a dingy shadow. For the reward of cleaning is its apparent result. Anyone of finer taste must look with especial disfavor on wiping up a railway tunnel or one of these intestinal corridors of an English inn.

George halted in meditation.

"Have you ever thought," he asked, "how man's ingenuity falls short of nature?"

He stroked a reflective chin, and continued.

"Observe this young woman who scrubs so fiercely on her knees—how like a crab she backs across the floor—how strong the soap—how coarse the brush! Yet with all her labor, although the skin wears off her knees, these boards will still be grimy—for dirt is in their grain. And now consider the cuticle of man, devised in nature's laboratory, and how in contrast the gentlest lather of a dainty cake brings it fresh as snow! One has but to splash a bit, then climb as pinkest Cupid from the tub. You follow me, of course. And I leave it to your hours of meditation—to this book you contemplate—how fearfully a Saturday would fall among us, if it were necessary to run beforehand to a druggist for a wire brush and a cleansing fluid."

There was silence for a moment.

"Yet I can't see," I remarked at last, "how a man with a great red nose can enjoy washing."

"He has found his pleasure in other ways," said Collins.

And now, with collars up, we shivered down the street to the entrance of the castle. It was George who acted as our guide, for yesterday he had been in stealthy commerce with the keeper of the gate and was big with fact.

As you enter the garden that lies below the castle there is a statue of Ethelfleda, and gravel paths run upon a terrace by the river. It is a charming spot, no doubt, in sunlight. But now water dripped from Ethelfleda's nose, and her stone kerchief was in her poke.

Tamworth has all the qualities of an excellent castle —a Norman keep whose battlements rise above the trees, a curtain wall of Saxon herringbone that is not unlike the courses of Roman brick, a timbered hall with a great fireplace and gallery for music, cellars and kitchen and a porter's lodge. There are flanking walls against attack, vantages for boiling oil. There is a well into which visitors drop pins and count the seconds of their fall. The drawing-room on an upper story is wainscoted in carved oak, and from its mullioned windows one looks on distant meadows. It would be delightful with sun and with its furniture restored, or with a winter fire upon the hearth. It is the kind of room where a lady might weave a screen or strum a harp with tunes of old, forgotten, far-off wars.

There are sleeping cabinets behind thick walls that suggest a plot against the state. And crazy stairways climb to higher rooms where it is said that ghosts still visit scenes of tragedy that even legend has neglected.

George led us around with glib knowledge, so we let the poor dog bark.

"The traditions of Tamworth," he began, "start with Offa, king of the Mercians."

But I also love to talk, so I interrupted. "That word Mercia," I observed, "is interesting. It is derived from *Mark*—a border or frontier, a delimitation, for we say now that manners mark a man. Mercia was the borderland against the Welsh."

"Just so," said George impatiently.

"There is the Mark of Brandenburg which was a frontier state, and Altmark and Neumark. Denmark was the Danish border. There are Welsh marches and La Marche in France. A marquis was a lord of a frontier. And as forests were commonly on borderland, our word murky was first used to describe their gloom. Letters of marque are a license to attack an enemy beyond a border.

"But I was telling you about Tamworth," said George.

"Offa built a palace here," he continued, "shortly after 755 and dug around it a trench of which traces still remain. In 874 the Danes destroyed it. Then came Ethelfleda of the dripping nose, daughter of King Alfred, whose husband was ealdorman of Mercia. By her instruction a great mound was cast up and on its

top she erected a keep which later furnished the present tower with its foundation. It was not long after the Norman conquest that such buildings as then stood were set to use for a convent of nuns."

"That's enough," said Collins. "I can't remember more."

"I'm not half done," whined George. "There was a Marmion lived here—the real ancestor of the chap that Scott invented. His description of Norham Castle on the border is used by Tamworth in its local guide.

> . . . battled towers, the donjon keep,
> The loophole grates, where captives weep,
> The flanking towers that round it sweep.

Tamworth had the usual visits of royalty, played its rôle in the Barons' Wars and surrendered to Cromwell. It fell to such neglect toward the end of the eighteenth century that the great hall became a blacksmith's shop for a near-by cotton factory. In 1897, at the diamond jubilee of Queen Victoria, the corporation of Tamworth bought the castle at auction for £3,000 and dedicated it and the surrounding acres to public use."

"You were speaking of soap and scrubbing brushes," said Collins.

"Was I?" asked George.

"An hour ago," said Collins. "Have you considered the part that the mirror, as the toilet's adjunct, has played in man's advance? It is doubtful if we would keep our faces clean did not a glass accuse us. When woman first crept through the brush and found

her reflection in a pool, vanity was born. And man is the only creature that seeks a mirror. A cat does not sit before a glass when she wets her paw and daubs it on her face. When a horse thrusts his muzzle in a trough, he does not hesitate and scrutinize his looks. Consider the dog! Does he—"

"Tamworth," interrupted George.

Tamworth seems to be unknown to the learned clerks of Mr. Cook, although it lies directly on the road to Lichfield which is a necessary stop upon their schedule. Yet Tamworth stands whole, unsoiled by feet. One can realize the past in its kitchens, its hall, its drawing-room. But it is a wise fisherman who is discreet in praise of the pool where he makes his catch.

We listened for ghostly echoes on winding stairways, and looked from narrow windows down sheer walls for a hundred feet. We checked off the museum. From the battlements we gazed across the meadows toward Bosworth Field, where Colley Cibber's Shakespeare's Richard's kingdom was offered for a horse. We sought traces of Offa's dike, which is not to be confused with his greater trench along the border of Wales. To the south, missing Tamworth by a mile, runs Watling Street with its Roman legends. And here we fancied Johnson and David Garrick trudging up to London.

There was a wet trickle inside my collar.

"I don't like this weather," I said to the custodian.

"May was the lovely month," he answered. "But have you heard the news from Canada—dry, not a drop of rain, people dying from the heat?"

"That," said George, hopping up and down for warmth, "would be the perfect death."

We dripped back to the Castle Inn where, by God's grace despite the Magna Carta, a fire burned briskly in the tap. It was now hard on noon, and several villagers had met for beer. A strong fellow with a beard ordered a double Scotch.

"The same," said George.

Does any patient reader, for all others have deserted this book by now, casting back upon his youth, recall a penny bank that was fashioned of iron to the likeness of a jolly negro? In some affluent moment of the nursery you put a cent into an outstretched hand, then pressed a lever at the shoulder, whereat the arm arose and dropped the penny between the glistening teeth. Here on the Tamworth mantel was one of these jolly negroes. The palm was hardly broad enough to hold an English penny, so I must assume it was designed for an American cent. But how it came to England was a mystery that the barmaid could not solve.

In a flash of better weather when puddles had turned to blue, we walked about the town, purchasing a bag of gooseberries which at a sign of cramp we gave to a group of children. We sat in a graveyard and talked of worms.

"Find any samplers in Tamworth?" I asked.

"Yes," said George. "Listen to this:

> Let spotless innocence and truth
> My every action guide
> And guard my inexperienced youth
> From vanity and pride."

"Fair enough," said Collins.

It was after lunch that we took the road.

George turned sadly to the castle tower.

"Just think," he said. "It was bought for £3,000.

Let spotless innocence and truth my every action guide

I could sell my house for three times that amount without its elephants."

George will be buying a castle somewhere and setting up a Norman shop for highboys.

Millions of strange shadows on you tend

CHAPTER XXVII

THE BLACK COUNTRY

What is your substance, whereof are you made
That millions of strange shadows on you tend?

FROM Tamworth we traveled northeast to escape England's district of smoke and factory. It is a task of nice contrivance. We had already bent our course to miss the suburbs of Birmingham. We had circled round to avoid Leicester. And now we swung aside from Nottingham. From Warwick to the Sherwood Forest we were to dodge like a football player who runs in a broken field. But, except for Coventry, no city laid its dirty tackle on us.

This Black Country, that lies in the encircling smudge of Birmingham, Liverpool and Manchester, is the measure of England's material wealth. Its tremendous cities are the essence of modern England. And men who labor at a whistle, who live in noisy din, who divide their product until craftsmanship is gone, who have

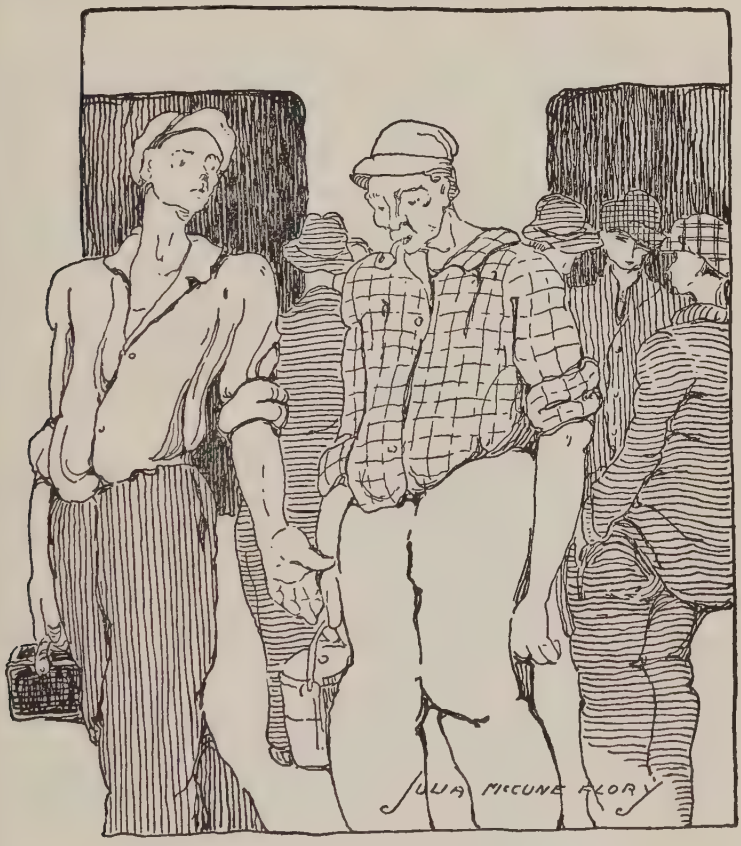
the luxuries of life but not its comforts—these are the actors on its stage.

The ocean is its pathway in and out for raw material and finished product, and even London is but its transient warehouse. Its coal and iron are dug at home, and they soil a thousand hills.

Smoke is the barometer of employment, of wage and dividend—the gauge of its civilization. It is these noisy Midlands and the looms and mines that lie neighbor to the north, together with the mines of Wales and below the Scottish border, and all their traffic on the sea—it is these which gather the money that Surrey and Devon spend on easy country life. For young palaces all through the south suck at a northern bottle. It is in the analysis of this new wealth—the shifting power that arose with the control of labor, and with labor itself at last grown free—that we learn of that progress from the eighteenth to the nineteenth century which is the main current of England's modern history.

Within this Black Country doubtless there are shady lanes and hedges that blossom in the spring. Here and there streams may be so unreceptive to dividends that they flow yet a while untainted in the competition. Runnels may still sing on a starlit night, and woodlands answer in the wind. Certainly the valley of the Dove near-by, the lovely highlands above Matlock and many a cloud-swept moor about the peak are yet unspoiled. Cities may still have beauty in their spacious squares. But in general throughout this district the towns are filled with din and dirty faces, their walls are smudged with smoke. All roads lead to cities and they are clut-

tered with hurrying trucks. In Surrey the rumble of a beer van falls upon the ear, but dull commodities crowd the black roads of the north.



Wherever two men talk

A traveler who is curious of England's present welfare will find the Black Country the surest ground to yield him fact. In lodging, in public bar, along the road, in the throng that awaits the opening of a picture house,

through the open window of a cottage, wherever two men talk, he will discover the thoughts of the English people. Hereabouts he may lay the shrewdest guess as to the depth of gloom and slough through which the country wallows.

To the Black Country the politician turns his ear that he may shift his policy for votes. It is from Manchester that important speeches most often are reported. And it was Manchester that gave its name to the school of politics that was the first to know the direction of the nineteenth century. Surrey lies in a haze of dreams, for there the older world is not entirely swept away. It is a pensioner too old to work, that lives on a northern dole. But on the roads toward Birmingham there is present reality.

The Black Country is the offspring of the nineteenth century, whose nursing bottle was filled with steam. Napoleon's protracted wars closed the shops of Europe and sent every nation to England for its manufactured products. By the time of Waterloo, England had gained a start that she held without a rival for a hundred years.

The Black Country marks the dislocation in which the cottage weaver left his home to take employment in a factory. Its start was starvation and child labor. Its growth was reform and factory laws. Its present is discontented democracy triumphant.

The tablets of the Black Country bear the names of Arkwright, Stephenson, Macadam, Telford, Bright, Cobden, Owen, Bentham, Cobbett. . . . These men mark the change from county power and rotten

boroughs, from George III and Pitt, from insularity except in wars with France, from Johnson and Goldsmith and Gainsborough's painted velvet.

To know the meaning of the Black Country and these millions of strange shadows that lie upon it, one must study the England of the eighteenth century. For the Black Country is more than a district and a factory system. It is more than the clothes that are built to standard, the motors, radios, ships and railroads, export and dividend, more even than the massed outcry of labor for its share. It is a state of mind, a philosophy of thought and a rule of conduct. Our discontent is manufactured in its loom. The discordant aspiration of our art and literature took its start in industry's vast unrest.

In 1760, when George III came to the throne, there were "no canals; few hard roads; practically no cotton industry; no factory system; few capitalist manufacturers; little smelting of iron by coal." London was England's one city.

Each village made sufficient shoes and clothes, hats, gloves and candles, beer and honey drink to meet its own immediate needs. Fuel was cut from its common woods, and did not come as coal from a center of export. It raised wheat outside, ground it to flour in its mill and baked its bread. A butcher was a killer of meat, not merely a row of hooks. A shoemaker was then a maker of shoes, not one who patched the product of a factory when a sole was worn. The village had its spinners for the wool that it raised on common land. In short, each town manufactured, in its primal sense, the wares

that it consumed. It lived not by selling its stuffs outside, and a workman's only customers were the neighbors of his street. But with mass production all this was changed. The town fell to merest tinkering and repair. And now it has become the abode of wealth that has retired from cities, and of poverty that stayed at home without ambition. All progress has been swept within the cities.

In the eighteenth century, except in London, no man lived beyond a lively walk of open fields and woods. And this must be remembered in our estimate, for rural circumstance breeds men and opinion that are different from the product of crowded streets.

When centralized manufacture arrived, it was a development so new and so beyond experience that its first effect was a dislocation unparalleled. The entire family was swept into a general factory, hours that were tolerable in cottage manufacture became intolerable in the greater congestion of many workers under a boss who stood above them remotely. And government for many years was too inexperienced to offer the relief of factory control. For a law follows a condition and does not precede. England's prosperity of the nineteenth century started in starvation and cruel serfdom. The people of England had as yet no voice in government, and the result was violence—the destruction of machines, rick burning, and local revolution.

But in nothing is the change from the eighteenth to the nineteenth century so apparent as it is in the alteration of men's thoughts. The word progress in its pres-

ent sense was not known. We now believe that unless we advance we fall back, that we must be richer or we shall be poorer, that our output today must be surpassed tomorrow, that habits unchanged are decay, that the opinions of our fathers are not quite good enough for us, that their comforts must be bettered, their luxuries increased, their journeys faster, their very cushions softer. We see evolution in everything around us. Even England, where we consider customs as traditional and fixed, is sweeping through alterations at a speed that would be startling, if we could forget the greater changes of America. And when we think of ourselves as a new world, we forget that, although we had no past, we are as old in modern history as England. For in 1776 all nations, as regards the great changes of social, industrial and political life, were in their swaddling clothes.

But to the Englishman of the eighteenth century the world was static. Civilization had attained its peak. He lived more or less in contentment and in a belief that things would continue forever as he found them. He had, more or less, as much money as he needed. He was surrounded by circumstance that pleased him, or at least by environs to which he was resignedly accustomed. He suspected, therefore, that changes, instead of bettering life, tended to its decline. Dr. Johnson was typical of his time. He was a Tory, firm in his allegiance to church and state, to lazy aristocratic rule, to any king who happened to be sitting on the throne. He was suspicious of disturbing thought. A penny post, a macadam road, a great factory and

wealth through export, roused his suspicions like that breath from radical France where already the seeds of revolutions prospered—a breeze that even then was ruffling the channel. His friend Goldsmith, in his Deserted Village, is the poet of things as they were, of pleasant customs that wealth was threatening.

> Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,
> Where wealth accumulates, and men decay.

When we read the poem now it seems a poet's dream in far-off cloister; and we forget that hard men of the world who were deep in affairs and government shared the beliefs expressed and looked with fear on an England that would give its strength to the pursuit of wealth and commerce. For England was ruled from ancestral parks, by men who lived on the rent of villages, by those who thought that trade was dirty on the fingers.

In politics England was a county aristocracy that lived in a newer kind of feudalism. The Crown had certain rights and a few other rights were settled on some of the common people, but England's control lay in its inherited estates, and the machinery of law was devised to preserve things as they were. "Few had a voice in the country, but many had a stake in it." Although the poor had no luxuries as they have now and much discomfort, it is likely that on the whole the people of England were contented.

There was no sharp division between employed and employer. Two hundred haphazard crimes were punishable by death, with a result that few could be found

guilty. The two universities were closed to Catholics and Protestant Dissenters. There was a religious test to keep public office from any schism against the church. Methodism offered heaven only to the outcasts of society. The pump rooms of Bath were brightly painted. At Strawberry Hill the muses gathered. Richardson read his novels to a female circle. Silk breeches and powdered wigs were still the fashion. Sugared verses were addressed to nymphs, and dueling pistols were kept ready. Nabobs brought strange fashions from India to Bloomsbury. There were nose-gays and sentiment, Mrs. Jordan and Miss Burney. Classic learning was the mode, and Latin was quoted in Westminster. It was an age of candlelight, first balloons, and Hannah More; of Chippendale and Heppelwhite, Grecian urns, blue satin, and artificial grottoes; of Warren Hastings, and the imitators of Mr. Pope; of coffeehouses, and female vapors. And for all its folly it had high virtues. "It had faults," writes Trevelyan of society when the century turned, "it had faults, of which drunkenness and gambling were the worst, but it lived a life more completely and finely human than any perhaps that has been lived by a whole class since the days of the freemen of Athens."

This was a strange world that passed away with James Watt's engine. The village was its commonplace, so it preferred the city. It was lonely in the country, so it chose the little turmoil of the Strand. It had heard the songs of birds until it disregarded them, had looked on woods and hills until they were vulgar to the eye. Mountains were but a barren waste

until Rousseau revalued them. The age had suffered privation, so it sought an easy life in coffee shops. The odor of clean earth was inseparable from toil, so it sought the smell of city torches in winter fog. It was raised in homespun, so it dressed its cuffs in lace. Its food was from a wholesome farm, so it minced on sweetened pastry out of France. In the eighteenth century the reality of England was the village and the country, and therefore its typical expression in art and literature was the city.

And the newer world became democracy triumphant. It was wealth and progress, justice and ugliness, luxury and discontent. Today when we hear a kettle sing, we understand the mighty tune that issues from its spout—a tune to which the world has marched for a hundred years, with destination still unknown.

So if a tourist would know England as it is today he must not spend his holiday wholly among the pretty villages of Surrey. Or if he travels there he must remember that they are but spots neglected in the rush of progress. And when he hears the tapping of a cobbler in the twilight of a village street, he must consider himself in a century now gone.

But he should sojourn in the north where the roads are crowded with the trucks of commerce, where men's faces are etched with the dirt of progress. And as he wanders on monotonous streets whose dull houses were built on contract, he will realize the price of speed and quantity, even of opportunity and of justice.

Collins rode ahead

CHAPTER XXVIII

IN THE RAIN TO ASHBY

Shall we give o'er, and drown? Have you
a mind to sink?

WE were hardly clear of Tamworth when the rain began again. It was not a crisp downfall of scampering arpeggio; but rather the earth and sky seemed of a common watery texture, and no one might guess whether the rain descended or seeped upward from the sodden ground. I have seen a fish swim as blindly in an aquarium when the water is unchanged and foul. Collins rode ahead, and he resembled

the creature of a Japanese print quite smudged in fog.

It was a world before Adam, when the waters were not yet parted from the land.

George sneezed, and the explosion seemed to start down near his stomach, for it nearly blew him from his wheel. But it was his attempt to eject an inch of water from his engine-room.

In an hour or so we were aware by nearer blacker shadows that we had entered a town. We dismounted and sheltered ourselves in an open corridor that ran from the sidewalk under roof. And here presently we chose Collins to be a dove and fly forth to learn what town it was, and whether there was a hotel from which the waters had abated. He returned with information that we were in Ashby-de-la-Zouch, and that there appeared to be an excellent hotel just around the corner.

"De-la-Zouch," said George. "We are in France. That was the Channel we came through."

We dripped into the hotel, and a shrewd female at the office wicket gave us a hard glance as we puddled her carpet.

"Perhaps you have read The Tempest," said Collins. "The sky, it seems, would pour down stinking pitch. Or Robinson Crusoe. It is a rare privilege to save a human life."

She yielded and assigned us pleasant rooms, in one of which there was an open hearth.

"We want a fire," I said.

"If you have it now," the maid replied, "it will be four shillings. At five o'clock it is two and six. And hadn't ye better wait the hour?"

But, despite her thrifty advice, we ordered it at once. As the little flame shot up, we gathered close.

"Don't drip on it," said George. "We must treat it as a tiny kitten."

We undressed and hung our garments on chair-backs about the hearth, where presently they began to ooze and steam.

"It looks like a scene from The Valkyrie," said Collins. "I shall never hear the fire-music again without thinking of your old blue shirt. The Metropolitan itself doesn't show a prettier smudge."

A great tray of tea and speckled cake now tapped upon the door; and, without waiting for an answer, an aged waitress entered with that insouciance which marks a class to whom sex is a far-off fourth dimension.

"*Merci, ma chèrie,*" said George, in excellent Edenese, with a pillow for a fig.

George did the honors, now wrapped like a Roman in a bath towel.

Our deep satisfaction, however, was given a bitter turn. Inexplicably the clouds had broken, and at the window appeared a beam of sunlight that was plainly laughing at us. I had always thought that there was no humor in nature, that it is entirely a human quality (except in kittens and awkward puppies), yet here was the sun grinning broadly at the curtain.

"Shall we start again?" asked Collins, who is always restless for the road.

"We shall not," said George. He put his finger on his shirt that still hung before the fire. "Old Brunhilda is not yet dry."

"But the sun will dry it," urged Collins.

"Furthermore," said George, "I look upon this bright Victorian wall paper with its shepherdesses and bleating sheep as the fairest prospect I have seen in England. I shall have a bath, and then I'll sleep."

There are only a few British bathrooms that possess a lock. This at best is usually some sort of metal device below the knob; but, whereas the iron plunger has doubtless good intentions, in practice it merely butts against the wood. So experienced travelers sing. I used to wonder why it was that the English so loved their bath that they burst into bass and tenor, and I am now persuaded that the folk songs of the British Isles are preserved chiefly by bathroom doors that will not lock.

But Ashby's bathroom had a door that wouldn't even close. Across the corridor was a common sitting room and there was an occasional swish of skirts upon the stairs. The crack at the door seemed made for a peeping dimity. Waiting for a lull in the female patter, I climbed in gently. I crouched low so as to offer a less debasing profile. I kept up a splash. I sang Asleep in the Deep in my most manly voice.

George's voice is thin and of higher range. A dull ear might take it for contralto, so may God have helped him when it came his turn.

On my return to the room, Collins was asleep. But Brunhilda was herself again. So I dressed, and went out to see the town. Clouds pelted to the east, for their massed revolt against the sun was broken.

Ashby is a pleasant little town with a park and ruined

castle in the outskirts. Around the park is a garden wall as a hint of privacy, and along the top is stretched a barbed wire to enforce the hint. There is a touch of irony that so slight a hedge guards battlements that were built successfully for war; yet the wire keeps barefoot boys from scratching their names. The castle is a Lear of scattered guard and broken fortune, who has but a single servant to trip its adversary.

But these ruined towers attest that Ashby was once a town of vast importance.

Alan la Zouche was a Norman lord, once a candidate for the throne of Scotland, who gained Ashby by marriage in the thirteenth century. The manor descended through several generations until his line died out. Subsequently the estate escheated to the crown and was granted by Edward IV to William Hastings whom he enriched with Lancastrian spoils. In 1474 Hastings was given the right "*muellandi, kernellandi, imbattellandi, turrellandi, et machecollandi*"—which is too easy for translation, though I hope you stick at *kernellandi*. It is interesting, however, that in the late fifteenth century the law was still written entirely in Latin.

But Hastings' kernells and turrets could not save him later from the tower when Gloucester had denounced him as a traitor. A Hastings, now the Earl of Huntington, played a part in the trial of Anne Boleyn. A Hastings married a niece of Cardinal Pole, in direct line from the house of York. Another Hastings had a shadowy claim to the English throne, and in this Queen Elizabeth found satisfaction as a rival against the claim of Mary Stuart whom she feared as a

successor. So Huntington was made a jailer of Mary when she was a prisoner at Tutbury near-by. And there were other earls, but of the seventh there was a daugh-

Religion should our thoughts engage
Amidst our youthful bloom
Twill fix us for declining age
And for the Awful Tomb.
1631 Ashford aged 16 years

It was the usual happy scene in Eden

ter, the Lady Elizabeth Hastings, whom Richard Steele lauded in The Spectator as Aspasia.

From this narrative will appear Ashby's importance in the past.

Nor are there signs lacking that it will again be drawn

inside the bustling world. Quiet as the town sits within the fields, one may see many mining stacks near-by. As the old wars fade from the crumbling walls, the Black Country creeps near to engulf them in smoke and dividend. Roads run in from Burton and Derby, Nottingham and Leicester, and soon a ring of suburbs will surround Ashby.

I followed a footpath along the garden wall, and on tiptoe saw towers where grasses flourished.

George had slunk out for samplers, like a cat that walks alone. At dinner he was excited over a purchase. Samplers had not been offered in the shops, but a merchant had hinted that a certain widow in the high street owned one that she would sell. A widow with a sampler! It was a double bait. He was off like a bachelor trout. He climbed a staircase from a courtyard and bought it from her wall. It was the usual happy scene in Eden.

Religion should our thoughts engage
  Amidst our youthful bloom
T will fix us for declining age
  And for the Awful Tomb.
1831 Ann Ford—Aged 16 years

Samplers are not George's only obsession. It is fair to remark that his old house on Euclid Avenue is visited by collectors from every state, and that on many items his opinion is accepted as authority. A layman is confused in the crowded rooms, but his litter that centers on George Washington is famous across the continent.

We saw a movie in the evening, and walked home beneath a starlit sky. We are beginning to quarrel with nature's routine. Every day it rains to impede our travel; but, when we are snug of an evening at the fire, the clouds go off and rest for a fresh endeavor on the morrow.

Sheep still skipped about our bedroom walls

CHAPTER XXIX

A SHORT CHAPTER THAT MERELY SEEMS LONG

It shall to the barber's, with your beard.

IT was raining when we awoke, yet sheep still skipped about our bedroom walls and a hundred bright-eyed twins leaned upon their wholesale crooks undaunted by the weather.

I lay in bed and looked upon this repetitious world. I counted the identical castles up and down and round-about—thirty-four of them, not including those that must have been hiding behind the headboard and several that were cut away to make the fireplace. To the designer of wall paper the world is three feet wide and six feet high. It is a space too cramped to express creation. One cannot lose himself in this little vista, for he comes back forever to where he started and on

any stroll he must lift his hat to a dozen sisters with a perfect smile. It is like a journey through America with its Statler hotels without variety, where each town offers a standard lodging and food that is cooked by a central formula.

Yet wall paper has its deeper symbol, if we can but find it. This repetition is the life of man, and six by three is canvas large enough. Breakfast, office, lunch, office, dinner, bridge—six steps to bedtime—each day a narrow path from ceiling to the floor, with its joint of paste that binds it to tomorrow.

With this sour conclusion, I put on my shoes.

A sniffy waiter was spotted with last night's dinner. His shirt, which now rounded out the adventures of the week, was the world as known to the ancients; and a touch of egg upon a stud was a sultan's turret with its flash of light. He appraised us at breakfast and sent us to a gloomy corner of the dark room for our pig. There were a number of better tables unoccupied, but our tweeds did not strike his eye with favor. Only when a group of Englishmen arrived was the electricity turned on.

"My God," said George, "it's sole. I thought I was eating ham."

The waiter's action was a trivial incivility, rather than an accident; but in a journey of several hundred miles I recall no discourtesy but this.

The rain had now stopped; but mist, which had arisen to its job at dawn, still blurred the world, and we swam like goldfish in a murky bowl.

The fictitious tournament described in Ivanhoe was

fought in a field near Ashby, and on the map to the north I saw the name of Ivanhoe House. But the sky was too dim for exploration.

All morning we traversed country sparsely dotted with mining shafts, and the faces of mechanics were etched with their dusty occupation. Soon we went through Coleorton where the Wordsworths once spent several months. And then for an hour our road lay on the northern edge of Charnwood Forest.

We passed in ignorance, as there were no trees. For what was once common forest was inclosed to private use in the early nineteenth century and its trees swept away for fertile land. Its meadowy hills are of such interest to geologists that even a layman might glean behind their harvest. Their tops are Triassic, jutting up in jagged points from a covering of more recent rock. They are the peaks of older mountains whose intervening valleys have been filled for these last few million years with marl and clay—"islands of immemorial age rising out of a sea which only just failed to engulf them wholly." A scramble to any of these tops is said to yield a wide prospect of pleasant country. Michael Drayton of the Mermaid Tavern was born at Atherstone near-by, and he was the poet of Charnwood when it was still a forest.

No tract in all this isle, the proudest let her be,
Can shew a sylvan Nymph, for beauty like to thee.

Our age, that has composed Blues and Mammy masterpieces, will despise these verses.

Beyond Charnwood we came to Loughborough,

which is a busy dirty town that makes stockings. In the autobiography of the Chartist, Thomas Cooper, there are a few paragraphs detailing the circumstance of weavers here in days when their gray distress was turning black.

Those who wish may now run out to play.

"The stocking and glove manufacturers did not build mills, but were the owners of the frames in which the stockings and gloves were woven. These frames they let out to the middlemen or 'masters' at a certain rent, covenanting to give all the employ in their power to the said 'masters.' . . . The masters employed the working hands, giving so much per dozen for the weaving of the stockings or gloves, and charging the man a weekly frame-rent, which was, of course, at a profit above the rent the master paid the owner of the frame.

"But it was by a number of petty and vexatious grindings, in addition to the obnoxious frame-rent, that the poor frame-knitter was worn down, till you might have known him by his peculiar air of misery and dejection, if you had met him a hundred miles from Leicester. He had to pay not only frame-rent, but so much per week for the standing of the frame in the shop of the master, for the frames were grouped together in the shops, generally, though you would often find a single frame in a weaver's cottage. The man had also to pay three pence per dozen to the master for giving out of the work. He had also to pay so much per dozen to the female seamer of the hose. And he had also oil to buy for his machine and lights

to pay for in the darker half of the year. All the deductions brought the average earnings of the stocking weaver to four shillings and sixpence per week."

There is much of this. The weaver was docked for inequalities of work. He paid full rent for his frame when trade was part-time and slack, and so any slump fell on him alone. Work might require a change of pattern and the adjustment of his frame, and he would spend a day in tinkering before his payment started. Or there was delay when he went for work, and he would come again at a more convenient hour.

From 1810 there were thirty years of chronic starvation; and to quiet their hunger, the taking of opium became a practice—by the adults "in a solid form, and by children in that of 'Godfrey's cordial.'" In 1845 knitting became at last a factory industry, and Parliament was aroused to grant protection to the workmen.

In 1819, a certain Robert Hall wrote as follows: "The writer well remembers when this country was the abode of health and competence; a temperate and sustained industry diffused plenty through its towns and villages; the harsh and dissonant sound of the loom was not unpleasing to the ear, weighed with the remembrance of the activity which it indicated and the comfort it produced; the advance of summer invited the peasant to a grateful change of labor, while the village poured forth its cheerful population to assist in preparing the tedded grass and reap the golden harvest: content resided in its valleys, song echoed from its hills; the distresses of poverty were almost unknown

except by the idle and the profligate, its natural victims, and even the transition from peace was rather heard at a distance than felt as a positive calamity. . . . But what a contrast is now presented in the languid and emaciated forms and dejected looks of the industrious mechanic who with difficulty drags his trembling limbs . . ."

Such conditions led to riot, especially when improved machinery lessened the number of required workers and threw a part to idleness. At such times it was customary to shoot the guards and demolish the new machines. This epidemic of violence was met by an act of Parliament, making the destruction of a machine a capital offense. But this did not abate the evil, for few juries would bring a guilty verdict when the punishment so far outweighed the crime.

At Willoughby-on-the-Wolds, outside the Black Country, we stopped for lunch. Edwinstowe, that marked our destination for the day, was still another thirty miles, so George scoured the village for a motor and a lift. Collins and I sat on a wall and watched him popping in and out of barnyards.

He returned in half an hour without success. The village owned two motors, but one was off on an errand at Nottingham and the other was scattered about in the midst of a major operation.

In a mile or so from Willoughby our side road entered the Fosse Way. This runs in Roman fashion a straight course without regard to towns, and it was ten miles before George found a motor that could be hired. It was not far from the crossing of the river Trent, at the

village of East Bridgford—a hint of changing road conditions—that he threw his bicycle into an idle tonneau with agreement that we meet at Edwinstowe.

And so through a sunny afternoon we pedaled on.

All of this district is marked as Sherwood Forest, yet it is now largely but a name. If Nottingham has still a sheriff, he goes about in a Morris-Cowley. This is the Ford of England, but it practices birth control.

Edwinstowe, with its twin village Ollerton, is the entrance to the Dukeries—a lodge at the gate, as it were, where common folk are halted who have no invitation from a Duchess. At home we save our purse by stopping with a friend; but I am informed that a dozen servants of an English country house divide in tips more than the price of a public lodging. Bachelors of limited income beg off from week-end invitations.

Edwinstowe lies on a single street but, if one will follow a path across a meadow, he will come in a hundred paces to the edge of what is locally called Sherwood Forest. It is of no great extent—a mile or so from end to end—yet if one excludes other wooded spaces of the Dukeries farther north, it is the chief remnant of a forest that once covered England for many miles. It is a fringe above the ears, when herpicide has failed.

The woods that we saw after dinner lacked the majesty of Savernake and the romantic vistas that are still scattered in the New Forest south of Lyndhurst. Sherwood hereabouts is largely of second growth. A path descends from a meadow to its depth and, by the mark of many feet, I concluded that it is tamed to

picnic use. Or perhaps the path is a short cut to villages beyond.

"How did the phrase—all around Robin Hood's barn—arise?" asked Collins. "It is always a search that doesn't find anything."

They had no need to find their dreams within the past

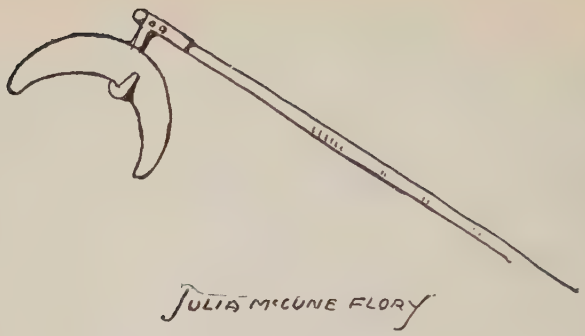
"That's just it," said George. "Robin Hood was the kind of fellow who wouldn't be bothered with a barn. You can't fancy him hitching up the old horse."

There is scant notice in history of Robin Hood, at most a paragraph whether he is more than legend. Yet history is agreed as to what the legend means. It is the discontent and rebellion that followed the Norman Conquest when Saxon England was dispossessed. Thousands fled from their Norman lords, and from their forests they plundered the Normans at the border. This continued until Norman and Saxon were fused in common living.

We sat for half an hour on a great log as evening filtered in.

> In summer time, when leaves grow green,
> And flowers are fresh and gay,
> Robin Hood and his merry men
> Were all disposed to play.

A boy and girl walked in the twilight hand in hand, for they had no need to find their dreams within the past.



Some hitch in the hanging of the moon

CHAPTER XXX

WE TALK TO A LAD WITH ADENOIDS

I had as lief the town-crier spoke my lines.

IF the making of the world had required another morning—some hitch in the hanging of the moon—our celestial week would have been lengthened to eight days and we would have seen the Dukeries with more diligence.

For it appeared next morning, which was Sunday, that every duke in these parts makes it his habit on this day to turn a great key in the padlock of his park and exclude all visitors to whom the duchess has not sent a note of invitation.

"And can't we get in—anywhere?" I asked our Madonna of the wicket.

"Sorry," she answered. "Thoresby, Clumber and Welbeck Abbey are open every day but Sunday."

"No chance at all?"

She shook her head.

"Thank God for that," was my response.

This unexpected climax requires an explanation.

I know of nothing that so lifts a tourist from his torpor as the prevention from seeing what he feels he ought to see. It is not enough that he bravely ignore a sight, for then his conscience pricks. But if he presents himself and finds the door locked and a signboard hanging on the knob, then he may walk forth as happy as a student who gets a cut. It is the something which is attempted that earns a night's repose. I still recall that many years ago I stood at the lobby of the National Gallery in London, thumb in guidebook, to be informed that the building was closed because of suffragettes. I had dedicated the morning to duty, and now with conscience washed, I turned to the freedom of the streets, a convert to women's votes.

What tourists need is a day off. Rome would be quite tolerable if the Vatican were locked, and if on Sundays the galleries were puritan. Rome is as fatiguing as the universe, and tourists also need the seventh day for rest. It is not only thy ox and ass, but also the stranger within thy gates.

"Sorry," said the Madonna of the wicket, ducking her head to fit the frame.

"And I suppose the gateman cannot be bribed," I persisted.

"Oh, no," she answered.

"And of course the walls are high?"

"Quite," she answered.

"And is there a dog in the driveway who is Fido to the bone?"

"Leo," she replied.

"True," I said, "and she loves raw meat."

"Him," corrected the wicket.

"It is strange," I added, "that the name of Fido, which should belong to large, fierce and faithful beasts, should be bestowed so often on toothless lap-dogs with a friendly sniff at strangers."

"Leo," she repeated.

"It is settled then," I answered. "We shall ignore Clumber House and Welbeck Abbey. This day shall stand forth as one of unique happiness."

We did, however, see the outside of Clumber House, which is the seat of the Duke of Newcastle. And how we were so faithless to the Sunday and our vow of idleness, happened in this wise.

From Edwinstowe we had circled on a woodland road until it met the highway near Ollerton. And so through the village of Budby, where a lane struck east along a stream. On rising ground beyond a little valley were the thick woods of Clumber House; and presently, passing the village of Carburton, we crossed a bridge and followed a road of entrance. From one precise moment to another we could not be sure that we were trespassers; but when our sin was certain, the spice of our dishonesty pushed us on.

We were now unmistakably in Clumber Woods, for gravel paths played around in all directions and great oaks whispered of ducal coronets. Clearly his excellency had neglected to put a lock on this rearward entrance. For a mile we followed the road, and it seemed the sweeter for our intrusion; when at a turn, we came to an ornamental bridge that crossed the

lower end of a pond. A quarter of a mile away, on the water's edge, rose Clumber House.

"Thar she blows," said George, and he leaned his appreciative stomach on the rail.

Three small boys were our companions on the bridge, so we asked them questions. Their spokesman was of a strange dialect that was hardly English.

"Try it again, my little man,"said George. "Are we looking at Clumber House?"

A slush of syllables slopped out.

"Dear me," exclaimed George, "what can Rollo be talking about!"

"Adenoids," said Collins. "It's adenoids that disturb his King James' version."

There was another slop of consonants.

"I understand him," said Collins. "He says that he is employed by the Duke as a dynamiter to blast new roads."

But presently, by straining at a repetition, it appeared that his father was a gardener on the Duke's estate. I am glad we got this straight, for a lad of six with adenoids and dynamite would seem to reflect on the judgment of the Duke.

"What are adenoids anyway?" asked Collins. "People are all the while having them out, but nobody cares to tell how they originally got in. It is like the apple in the dumpling."

"They are like little gumboils," said George. "And yet with gumboils one can speak succinctly. Adenoids, on the contrary, affect the singing voice like a potato that pauses in the larynx."

This does not get us far in pure science, and some day I shall look them up in A-And. I shall find, of course, as usual, that the neighboring articles on the Adirondacks and Addison's Disease are more interesting and that they prevent my complete absorption in adenoids.

I have mislaid the guide book of Clumber House. This would give a dishonest man free rein, and he would run ahead unchecked by fact. "Clumber House," he would begin, "occupies the site of an ancient abbey." For this is always safe.

George was still pestering the lad.

"What does your father raise?" he asked.

"Shellerishitik," he answered.

"And does the Duke eat it?"

The boy nodded.

"With mayonnaise or lemon?"

"Ishelherish."

"It is probably," said George, "a strange new vegetable like broccoli. I shall ask for it at dinner."

He handed out three pennies, and the dynamiter and his companions scampered from the bridge.

Clumber House is beautiful chiefly for its setting. For where lake and woods are partners, where clouds float on silent water, no handicraft of man is needed. Swans paddled here and there, and crooked their necks to behold their beauty in the stream.

We tried next to see Welbeck Abbey, for I had read of its eccentric tunnels designed by a crazy man. The gate was closed, and at our shout an old woman came from the lodge with the expression of one who is disturbed in the midst of pie.

"I know, madam," I said, "that it is the closed hour. Let me forestall your obvious objection. But we are three distinguished travelers from America who are drawn here by Welbeck's fame. We have in full measure our country's weakness as to tips. So perhaps there might be an exception to the Duke's excellent rule."

She was inclined to think not, unless we had an order from the agent. I offered instead a letter of general introduction that I carried from my publisher—one of those To Whom It May Concern. But she said it did not particularly concern her.

"I hope," said George, "that we have not taken you from lunch."

Yes, we had.

She returned to her pie.

"When you write up Welbeck," said Collins, "say something mean about it."

"Better yet," I answered, "I'll ignore it."

We mounted our wheels.

"Now shall we try Hardwick Hall?" I asked. "It's several miles south, outside the Dukeries."

"What is it?" asked Collins.

"It belongs to the Duke of Devonshire, and it has a quilt made by Mary Queen of Scots."

"No," said George. "At Cirencester I would have liked it, but I am warm now."

"How about Newstead Abbey? That's around here somewhere, and my readers will expect it."

But George had pedaled off.

In a descriptive sense this chapter is a failure, but

I lay it to the moon. If it had gone up crooked and had stretched the week, you would have read what you would have read—something with a tang of fashion. For I have a yellow fountain pen that is a snob.

She returned to her pie

In the Dukeries travel is permitted only on the highways and, although these run through pleasant country, no glimpse is obtained of the great houses that give the district its name.

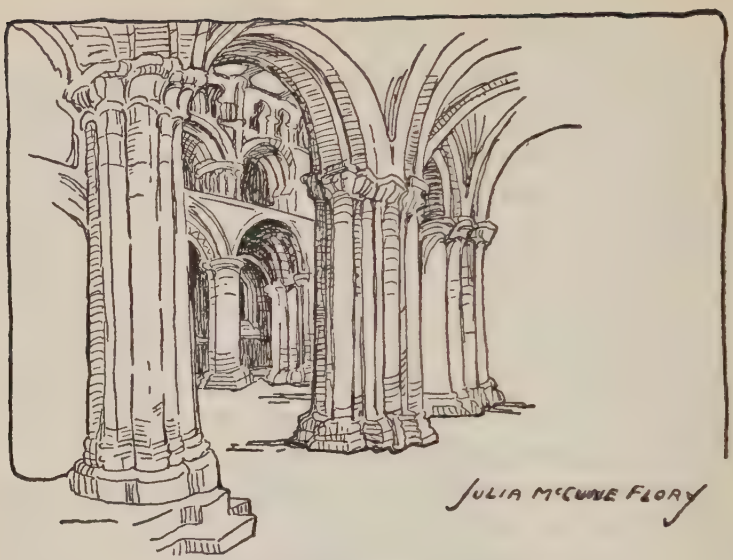
Presently we passed a motor with a broken axle, and

two men with a rail as lever to lift it. It was George's generous idea to help them with advice. So we reclined beside the road and lent them our experience.

At Worksop, on the northern edge of the Dukeries, George entered a shop for post cards. His visit was too unexpected, for at the very moment the salesman happened to be dispelling his Sunday gloom by a young lady on his knee. George is the soul of discretion, so he made his choice of cards with turned back, and left the even change. "Myself, when young," he sang, and his eye glazed with happy memories.

At Doncaster, which is a considerable town with racing in the season, we lunched at a little hotel whose coffeeroom was upstairs. I had once ended at Doncaster a long hard day on bicycle; and my recollection is chiefly how I had bought a bottle of embrocation made for crippled horses, and employed the boots to rub it in. But that is a chapter in another book.

After lunch we went north through cold intermittent showers to Selby. York was less than twelve miles away, but the showers were now a downpour. Selby possesses an abbey, so we called it a day and unpacked.



The first Norman abbey of the North

CHAPTER XXXI

THE RIVAL ADVANTAGE OF AN ABBEY AND A CENTRAL FURNACE

Look here, upon this picture, and on this.

SELBY lies too close to York to be a usual destination, and motorists see the abbey merely across the shoulder as they swing north across the marketplace.

Selby was a Roman town, but its name is Danish. *By* means a dwelling or a single farm, but came to be a village; and in Scotland a cow stall is still a byre. Yorkshire and all of this northeastern coast was hit by Danish inroads. Selby lies on the River Ouse only a little distance from the ocean, and it was towns in such loca-

tion that the Norsemen from Denmark and Norway first assailed; for a bay or river gave their open vessels safety from the sea and from land attack. Yet *by* indicates that the Norsemen came to stay rather than for mere plunder. When it was chiefly pillage, other syllables mark their transient occupation—*wick* (a roadstead, as at Greenwich), *ford*, or *fiord* (a passage for ships, as at Deptford), and *ness* or *naze*, which means a nose or promontory and implies a view of the coast as it was seen from the open sea. So we infer that a viking family settled on the site of a Roman town and drew to them neighbors from beyond the ocean.

Selby Abbey is of as old an importance as any Norman foundation of the island, except Battle Abbey built near the field of Senlac.

It seems, on the word of legend, that in Auxerre, France, toward the close of the fourth century, there lived a certain Germanus, a soldier, "one of the six dukes of Gaul" under the Roman rule. He was a huntsman, a prodigious fighter, and a sinner of the usual Roman sort. In vain had the Bishop of Auxerre urged him to holier ways and the service of religion. So one day, when Germanus was inside the church, all doors were locked. Germanus was bound, his head was tonsured and, in short, when the doors were opened, he came forth a monk.

Nor does Germanus seem to have rebelled at this. He disposed of his embarrassing dogs and wife as best he could, and for the next thirty years led a life of such ascetic piety (one meal a day, no bread, wine, oil, pulse

or salt) that he won promotion and became at last the Bishop of Auxerre. It is said that he traveled in England, in Cornwall, and in Wales, and that he was the leader of the British against the Picts and Scots in the "Alleluia Victory." And so Germanus died at last, was canonized and became an English legend.

It was toward the close of the eleventh century, when William was looking northward through the Channel mist and fretting with his preparations for attack, that there was a monk at Auxerre named Benedict who prayed that he might perform some worthy deed. And St. Germanus came to him in a vision and bade him follow the great William to England, to Salebeia (which is Selby) and there to build a church to the glory of God and St. Germanus.

This was rather a stiffer task than Benedict wanted, for he preferred to be pious at home. And, of a consequence, it was necessary for Germanus to repeat his visit. Benedict, like Hamlet, needed a ghost to prod him twice. So Benedict packed his ancient trunk. A finger of the old saint had been preserved as an altar relic at Auxerre, and this was given Benedict to guard him on his travels and to be used in the consecration of the new foundation.

But maps in those days were inaccurate, so Benedict went to Salisbury, whose name Salisberia, so closely resembled Salebeia. He had unpacked the finger and had freshened it up a bit, when Germanus, whose stay in Paradise seems restless, appeared for the third time and pointed out his error. So Benedict put the finger

in his bag again, sailed up the North Sea, entered the Humber, turned up the River Ouse and arrived at last at Selby.

He had hardly erected a few temporary buildings when a certain Viscount Hugh, who was holding York for the Normans, chanced upon the scene. He talked with Benedict of his hopes and plans, took a look at the finger, then applied to the Conqueror and secured a royal charter and sufficient funds. Selby, therefore, followed hard on Battle Abbey which William was still building to commemorate his victory at Senlac. It was the first Norman abbey of the north. A considerable remnant of this old Norman work is preserved, and in the nave one can find little that is as late as the beginning of the thirteenth century.

Several calamities have befallen the abbey. In the middle of the fourteenth century a great fire swept through the chapter house, the dormitory and treasury, and did damage to the church itself. The central tower fell at the close of the seventeenth century. Then in 1906 there was another fire so disastrous that "at first it seemed as though Selby was to be another addition to Yorkshire's long catalogue of ruined abbeys."

There is a drawing of the monastery as it looked in the year of its dissolution—an irregular inclosure of many buildings, whose number and intricate arrangement attest the multifarious occupation of the convent. Most of these buildings have now been swept away to give space to the growing uses of the town. But the abbey itself has survived neglect, ruin and

abuse, and is again restored to a semblance of its ancient beauty.

The arms of the Washington family may be seen in a clerestory window. There is memorial glass for the German war, and a Jesse window of the fourteenth century; a recent pulpit and an ancient screen of oak; a modern organ with hydraulic engines; a transept of our own time, and original vaulting in the sacristy. There is a statue of St. Germanus, and I looked for the missing finger.

There is a leper's squint. This is a diagonal piercing in the wall of the north aisle—for the south aisle always lay against the cloister—and through it an outsider could see the high altar. These openings are found in many English churches, and vergers will always tell of lepers, barred from service, who gathered outside for this slight comfort at the celebration of the Eucharist. I wonder if their contagion was always leprosy, for this disease now seems so far away from English abbeys.

Selby was Benedictine. Most of these abbeys, either Benedictine or Cistercian, were erected in the open country, or, like Selby, in the merest town. For their choice was fertile land for crops and cattle, wooded valleys where streams were full of fish. But their life was too vital to stay in isolation long. Little by little villages were built in the fields beyond their walls. Commerce and secular industry crept in. The villages grew to be towns and cities until, at the dissolution, the ancient walls were pulled down to be a quarry for dwelling houses. Some of these abbeys—Tintern,

Fountains, Netley—still stand in open country, but I fancy that those which were of greatest mark upon their times became a nucleus for a growing population roundabout.

And Selby, therefore, is too closely jammed to show its best, and too much is swept away. The noise of the market sounds against its doors. Although it is of rare interest to those whose eyes have benefit of training, it is neglected by the general tourist in favor of those abbeys which still retain their rural beauty.

At dinner a Canadian and his wife sat at a near-by table. They caught our western accent and opened conversation with us. He had been a factory superintendent in Toronto, and was now shifted to an English plant at Selby. They had arrived but the week before, and were not yet settled.

"It must be rather pleasant," said George, "to live so near this lovely abbey, to hear its carillon at night."

The woman shook her head.

"We've been cold ever since we landed. We have only a stove and a hearth, and there is coal to be lugged."

"It's the old world's simplicity of life," said George.

"In Toronto," she continued, "we had an electric washing-machine, an electric range—a plug to punch—and a vacuum cleaner."

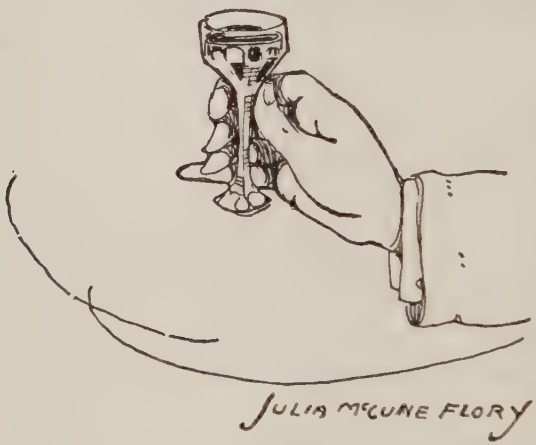
George looked his sympathy.

"And now," he said, "you have candles. That's what Germanus had—a tallow dip."

"Gas," she answered. "And it's been years since I struck a match."

To her England was an alien land, cold and rainy. She had been shivering since she left the steamer. When migration turns back home, it comes as a pioneer to discomfort and privation.

When the Canadian and his wife found that we were their neighbors across the Great Lakes, we were at once



"To the vacuum cleaner," said George

old friends. We sent across to their table a remnant of Chablis, and all together we pledged their chilly venture. "To the vacuum cleaner," said George, and we rose to a standing toast.

As we travel north the days grow long, and it is now only by an effort that we can stay awake till dark. There was twilight on the sill when I flopped three times and went to sleep.

Collins came in at ten o'clock and went to bed with

that exaggerated stillness that would have awakened the Seven Sleepers. Presently he stubbed his toe, and I heard him at his explosive prayers. Twilight sank to darkness and the patter of footsteps in the street dripped like far-off water.

Sunny days in Yorkshire were now a sodden pulp

CHAPTER XXXII

TO YORK, WHERE GEORGE FALLS INTO A PUDDLE

Not poppy, nor mandragora,
Nor all the drowsy syrups of the world . . .

"AH," said George at breakfast, "I had forgotten. I was going to ask for shellerish."

He turned innocently to the waiter.

"How is your shellerish this morning?"

The waiter stared.

"A favorite vegetable," George continued, "of the Duke of Newcastle, served at Clumber House, I think, with mayonnaise. All young dynamiters cry for shellerish. It is believed to be a cure for adenoids."

The waiter spoke succinctly, as one who squelches a jest.

"There's ham," he said.

"Ah," said George, "I see that you are not troubled with them. Probably you have merely rheumatism and gumboils. But bring me this pig you mention."

"Yes, sir. Very good, sir," and he retreated to the kitchen.

By this time the reader will be prepared to learn that it was raining. Showers had become as thick as coffee, and as common as boiled potatoes.

George propped a London Times against the sugar bowl.

"It seems to be bad weather everywhere," he said.

Each morning the papers showed the increasing depth of rainfall, in order that one holiday resort might compare its misery with another's, and take an ounce of cheer that a neighbor perhaps had an inch the worst of it. It's the trite consolation that was offered Hamlet at his father's death.

Hotel porters at Hastings were reported so wasted through lack of tips that their mighty coats, built to a plumper season, hung on them in lean folds. Waiters of the Peak cut their throats for front page news, and the shiny name of Brighton was a mockery. Any landlady of common shrewdness exposed the daily paper to her patrons' notice, to convince them that nothing could be gained by change. The white birch logs, cherished from summer to summer to be June's bright ornament in the parlor fireplace, had been lifted out; and blue flames licked on common wood to give a touch of warmth to blue old fingers. Any man whose name happened to be Noah—Noah Webster, even—would have been lynched as he signed his name. Guests sat all day and studied indoor mottoes. In this general catastrophe of the English resorts, however, the cheer-

ful billboards of the railways still carried on, although their colored prints of Sunny Days in Yorkshire were now a sodden pulp.

When we were so ill-natured as to jest with natives about the weather, we were told we should have cycled up in May when the sun was on the job. And confirmed optimists recited the drought in Canada with its stifling heat. A bit of rain now, they admitted bravely with a smile, but at least it wasn't stuffy.

Collins' blue-bird nose was pressed so often on the window for signs of a changing sky that he will need a beauty surgeon to restore its former curve. And the phrase—his nose is out of joint—must always express to me disappointment and a hope deferred. It is experience that teaches us the pith of English phrase.

George gazed gloomily past the bird cage and the aspidistra of the parlor.

"It was a mistake," he said at length. "We should have cycled this summer up the Nile, and been quite happy tossing pomegranates to the alligators."

He turned to the barren consolation of old catalogues. Not even a sampler could have roused him from his torpor.

There was an ancient smell in the Selby tap, as if old beer had sat too long in slippers by the fire. Huntsmen in red jackets who advertised whisky seemed ironic, for only a web-footed fox could have still endured. Cauliflower drifted from the kitchen. There was a smell of cabbage. Mops splashed along the corridor with a whiff of yellow soap.

George had sunk on a bench along the wall.

"And we were so happy on the Mauretania," he said, "I suppose the friends we met are now in Switzerland, basking in the sunshine. I'll never leave my china elephants again."

And now at last the downpour had settled to a lazy trickle, as if it knew it had all day to do its chores. So we buttoned up our rubber jackets, flattened out our ears to be an extra pent for dripping water, and launched ourselves on the slippery pavement.

My yellow pen, drooping like a daffodil in storm, declines description.

From Selby to York is twelve miles. Collins and I, having found the great hotel at the railway station, waited at the door for George. It was fifteen minutes before he came, and then in a damaged state.

It seems that he had plodded uneventfully through puddles to the suburbs of York. But here, in crossing obliquely the rails of a tramway, he slipped and plunged into a deeper pool. And then while he was still floundering in the mud, a truck had rumbled past and sprayed him with more dirty water.

"And it was a towel I needed, for I had been already in the tub."

George paused reflectively.

"It was Hovis bread that smeared me," he added.

But the bitterness of this was not a threat of revenge. It was only that irrelevant detail that Ibsen used to heighten tragedy. Little Eyolf's parents discussed what they would have for supper, just after their son's death was announced.

"Hovis bread," repeated George.

Never again will his natty golf suit grace a widow's tea. It was broken at knee and elbow.

We shielded him, while we checked our wheels in the railway station. Something in George's eye betrayed his thought.

"Look here," I said, "you are not going to claim that wheel. You are planning to desert it."

"Perhaps," he answered. "That is its advantage over a wife. You can walk out without alimony. But at least I know how a man feels who has a wife who frets him."

The Station Hotel was full. It seems that York was celebrating the seventh hundredth anniversary of the diocese, and that clergymen had flocked in. Only one room was left, but there might be another later in the day. The one now at our disposal was at the top of a tower, two flights above the ambition of the lift.

"It will do," I said, "for our friend here, the Canon. He left his parish this morning at Selby, but has been sprinkled with Hovis bread."

"Hovis bread?" repeated the lady. "I don't quite understand."

"It doesn't matter," I answered. "All he needs is rest and a tailor to mend his surplice."

We had crowded around George to conceal his lapses from the unbroken cloth of the English church that thronged the lounge, and we now hustled him into the elevator and up the stairway to the tower. There was a party of young American women in the uppermost corridor, but we pushed him through without a blush.

His state of health was not dangerous, but his clothing was. So he washed his wounds, rung for the tailor, and went to bed at once. I went out to buy anything that a resourceful chemist might think I needed.

When I returned with iodine and embrocation, lint and bandages, George was sitting up in bed with a tray of lunch on his knees and a happy smile on his face. There was, also, a dimpled bottle at his elbow. His clothing, it seems, would not be back until four o'clock, and until that hour he was to be a cheerful convalescent, relieved of duty toward the sights of York. He had stuck out his tongue at the Roman walls and minster towers.

George spread a whole slice of bread, and noticed my inquiring glance.

"I don't care," he said, "it may be Hovis."

He sunk his jaw in a great half-moon so that every tooth could do its bit.

"In fact, I hope it's Hovis, for I am grateful. Hovis has opened my eyes. I have looked this distressing trip straight in the eye, and at last I know the truth. I'm done. Done! You and Collins can ride on to perdition, if you wish. But I am going to sell my wheel and travel north by train. And let me tell you that this last hour has been my happiest since I joined you cubs."

If Lear, turned adrift by his heartless daughters, had found a snug tavern on the stormy heath, he and George would have been partners in content.

But joy holds an expiring lease. Prompt at four

o'clock, the clothing, now mended and pressed, tapped upon the door, and the sun came out.

George groaned.

"Dear, dear," he said. "Scarlet fever has a longer convalescence than a pair of busted pants, and therefore I would prefer it. However—"

Micklegate Bar, York

CHAPTER XXXIII

YORK

Wasteful Time debateth with Decay.

GEORGE slipped into his mended trousers, and we went forth to see the town—a parade on the Roman walls, a visit to the Guild Hall, a turn about the narrow streets, until at last we sat in the crossing of the minster to meditate upon the glass of the Five Sisters.

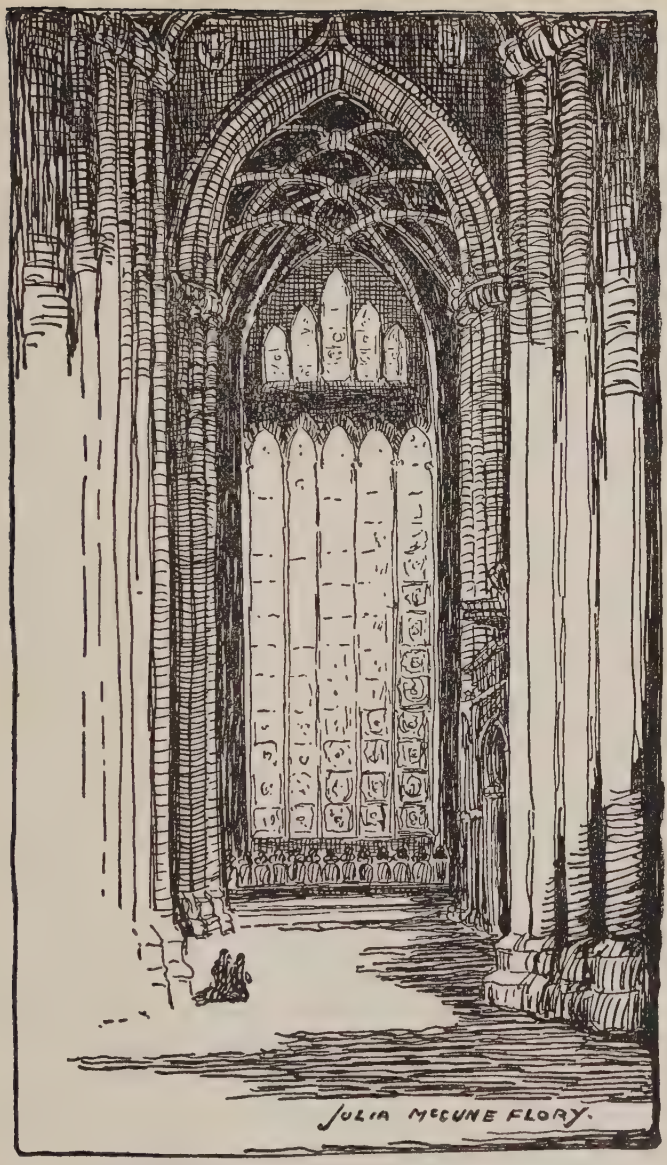
They are the finest windows in England but, as we writers confess so often in letters home, words are beggars in description. They are as soft as the trem-

bling *sotto voce* of an organ's pipes, as lovely as the uncaptured text of a poet's starlit thought, as radiant as a saint's exalted dream of Paradise. In history's vast book, they are the chapter of an ancient year when beauty was the vital possession of men's souls.

"And there is another thing about them I like," said George. "What I like most about York Minster is that one is not tempted to walk around. This bench offers so undeniably the best general view, that I find York a very restful building."

Old glass, so common in France, is rare in England. It is mostly of little patches whose effect is dulled by a gaudy modern neighbor or lost in the cold white light of unpainted windows, and nothing is comparable to the jeweled interior of Chartres. England's wealth of glass, before her iconoclasm, was considerable, nor were her religious wars as numerous as those of France. But the Huguenots respected the beauty of a theology they hated, whereas the English bigots of Henry VIII and Oliver delighted in its destruction. The south, although it flares hot, is of lazy unpersisting temper. When its first fury has been spent, it lays off for a Latin holiday, retires to a wine shop and rises late. But Puritans get up early and, with but a sandwich for their lunch, they spend the day poking at the painted glass and hooking down the statues. The same dogged persistence that pushed Anglo-Saxons all around the world, wrecked the English churches.

"Not at all," said George. "It's the bad climate. It must sour a man. Sunlight danced across the bedroom of the Huguenot. The Puritan looked out on



They are the chapter of an ancient year

puddles. On any morning of this trip I would have been glad to smash something. English churches aren't unlocked until a man has had his tea, and that's the reason."

"Shall we take a look at the crypt?" I asked. "We'll be asked about it, back in Cleveland."

George slumped down more deeply in the bench.

"Perhaps," I persisted, "we should climb the tower."

"Not me," said George. "The secret of happiness is to know when one is happy. I prefer a time exposure of this single view, rather than a dozen snap shots around the building."

The city of York differs from England's southern cathedral towns. Canterbury, Winchester, Salisbury, Exeter and Wells, are unfretted with factories and progress. In size and population they are much the same as several hundred years ago. Their railways do not sprawl to yards, with warehouses and engine shops. Contract labor has not built vast suburbs around them, or devised factories for a thousand hands. The gates of Winchester and Canterbury still look across scattered housetops to open country. Wells Cathedral resides within a garden, and there are swans that swim upon its pools. Any higher wall of Exeter reveals meadows and grassy hills. These cathedral cities of the South belong in essence to an older England, where ritual still bids for the soul of man and contentment dwells on narrow streets. One feels the past at Canterbury, and he wanders past trinket shops that once gulled travelers from the Pilgrims' way. Winchester is a glass case of happy outworn things; and if the trees stir

in evening wind, their song is of Alfred, of Swithin and forgotten saints.

But York, although it is older, is also newer. Its living runs with England's progress. It is an industrial city with iron foundries, motor works, breweries, flour mills and tanneries. It is a railroad center, with vast nets of track, and its hotel might be at a London terminal. Labor goes to work at a whistle. There are tramcars and traffic problems, policemen who start and stop the tide of travel like more efficient Canutes, a population that jostles at the curb, shops that draw trade from towns near-by. A housewife at Winchester would need to dust her mantel only once a week, but at York she must wipe the soot each morning.

"Has it occurred to you," asked George, "that the filth of antiquity came chiefly from defective sanitation, and that our dirt is incomplete combustion?"

George lifted a painful leg to an easier position on the bench, and continued:

"I would be glad," he said, "if in this book of yours you would direct a paragraph toward an antiquity that displeased the nose with horrid odors, and contrast it with our prophylactic age that offends the eye. You might mention that Shakespeare's father was arrested for permitting a manure pile to gather outside his door, and that now in contrast we convict a man whose chimney annoys a neighbor. The Greece of Pericles must have smelled in summer. The palaces of the Medici had defective drains. The Renaissance, gorgeous with its paintings, its towers and belfries, left

the nose alone without a master. Do you follow me?" asked George.

"You can make something rather pretty out of this," he continued. "Our modern education in æsthetics is for the nose alone, with the eye neglected. Our cities are ugly to look at. Our buildings are great efficient boxes. Their decoration is a sham—corrugated iron roofs, factory windows, bald utility—yet the nose parades among them triumphant without a disturbing whiff. The ancient world smelled bad, yet the prospect of its roofs was charming. The meanest hovel of a present factory is sweeter to the nostril than the Vatican in its palmy days before the bathtub came."

George paused.

"There is something in this," he continued, "that saddens me. The progress of civilization is so discouraging. Its energy and taste are sufficient towards so narrow a perfection. The Renaissance instructed the eye alone. The period of Beethoven specialized upon the ear. We have a leaning to the nose. It's like my golf game. On a certain day I am cunning with my driver, but bungle the irons; nor can I ever gather my intermittent perfections into par."

"And now," he added, "let us all be quiet, while I gaze happily at these Five Sisters."

But York is not wholly swallowed up in progress. Timbered houses nod forward to one another across narrow streets to whisper of the times before the dissolution. Alleys go winding to the river with an ancient air of leisure. Crumbling churches stand forward from upstart buildings to mark a former line of street.

Echoes play in little squares and open spaces. The trailing garment of a priest is a clew to older days. There are gardens sheltered here and there where Stuart kings jested with their courtiers. And the walls themselves offer a lonely parade around the city, with hint of the Roman legions that were posted here against the north.

The Roman occupation is so vague. It is but a dream that is forgotten. But Rome lived in England for more than four hundred years and left its stamp on every city, its inheritance in every modern thought. Here at York the sixth legion was in garrison for three full centuries. Stations were set at intervals of easy march all the way to the wall of Hadrian and Severus, and behind this multiplied defense York had security to cultivate the arts of peace. In the level valley of the Ouse villas and gardens betokened wealth and splendid living. The Emperor Severus died at York. Here the great Constantine was born. York was *altera Roma*, its bulwark to the north. And it prospered as long as Rome itself was strong, and fell only in the empire's crash. Then pirates swept across the country and trod its Latin into dust.

I have been cribbing these Romans from a book by Arthur Norway, so now I quote from his better pen.

"The Roman occupation of these islands is a sort of fairy tale," he writes, "the story of some temporary raid, some huge adventurous army which came and went, leaving about as much memory of its presence as the shadow of a summer cloud upon the earth."

Quite false, he says.

"The sentinel who kept watch upon that old red tower . . . was thinking all the time of some vineyard on the Sabine hills, or of some white-walled town on the sunny coast of low Apulia, where the night fell how differently from the misty darkness of this cold northern land, and the stars came out warm and large and golden in the sky."

Three hundred years of Roman life! And its evidence he finds in York's museum. "There, in the silent rooms of this old building," he continues, "lie not only the outward signs of the presence of the Romans on this ground, where they have been so long but half remembered, not only their statues and their milestones, their altars and the vessels of glass or pottery which served them for their daily use, but also their more intimate possessions, their ornaments and jewels, their rings, their bracelets, and the armlets which their children wore. There are the trinkets of a Roman lady put together by the hands of those who loved her and laid beside her in her coffin, and there, too, are the childrens' toys, their whistles, their little messes of red paint, the scraps of glass and earthenware, with which they played hopscotch, the shells they gathered at the seaside, and brought home to York as treasures."

"I think we should visit this museum," I hinted.

"I think," said George, "that you should have another think. Remember that I am an invalid today and should be humored. These Five Sisters please me more than any Roman mummy. You forget that I am

a lady's man. That tallest sister in the middle is perhaps a widow."

George eased a leg, and continued.

"Fatigue," he said, "is the salvation of a tourist. It is the heaven that ends his bustling day. You and Collins may look at those little messes of red paint. This bench is the answer to my prayer."

An official, dressed like the Spanish Inquisition, tapped upon his shoulder.

"Sorry," he said. "It is the closing hour."

"The closing hour," said George. "How reminiscent! The phrase reminds me of other happy benches where I have sat in peace."

Yet, as we went, we turned for a final look at man's chief masterpiece of England.

We stopped in an ancient square to listen to an election speech. It seemed to be of better logic and of pleasanter temper than we would have heard at home, with less glitter and the false analogy that is our substitute for fact. The speaker recited the achievements of his party without personality or malice. Yet the stolid silence of an English audience must test a speaker's patience. No questions were asked. There was neither objection nor agreement. At most there was a wagging of a pipe or the stroking of a chin. There was only a single interruption, and this came from a man who had lingered in a bar too long. A considerable crowd stood around, but it was merely for an entertainment that did not cost a sixpence.

Our window at dinner looked on a square of ancient York, and we slept in a modern terminal hotel.

Fountains Abbey

CHAPTER XXXIV

TO FOUNTAINS ABBEY, WITH SUNLIGHT FOR THE START

Sometimes too hot the eye of heaven shines,
And often is his gold complexion dimm'd.

GEORGE sold his bicycle next morning to the parcels man in the railway station.

"Two pounds," he said. "If it had been a wife, it would have taken longer and I would have been carried into red ink."

As he wanted an extra day at Durham, he decided to go on by the afternoon train and wait for our arrival. He had once stopped there a week, and he knew two old ladies who were both worthy to be widows.

Collins and I had planned to cycle north to Rievaulx for the night, as its abbey is said to be not only beautiful in ruin but to set "in a scene of wild and solitary grandeur." Nor is this impossible, for a sky line hems a world. It was Cistercian, an order which aimed to stiffen the lax discipline of the Benedictines and so chose remoteness from the cities and the disturbing contact of the world. It was felt to be a monk's privilege that he save his soul by lonely prayer, but not his duty to enforce the rigor of his life on others. Example was considered more persuasive than precept.

From Rievaulx we had planned to turn west over the Hambleton hills and swing south to Ripon and Fountains Abbey. The scent of moorland gorse and singing Ryedale streams would have been ample payment for our wide detour. And Byland Abbey lay, also, on this course, with Coxwold near by "where Laurence Sterne mocked the coming and going of the years." The church of the eighteenth century chose strange men to expound its texts—sportsmen in easy living, younger sons denied a legacy and title, and city wits from jesting coffeerooms. That yellow brain of Laurence Sterne, busy all week with Uncle Toby, intrigue and wanton housemaids, must have devised queer sermons for a Sunday morning.

But the weather was too uncertain for the hills, so we took the direct road to Ripon to gain a day and keep in level country.

A few miles out of York we passed Marston Moor, where, in 1644, Cromwell defeated the Royalist army under Prince Rupert and wrote that "God made them

as stubble to our swords." Napoleon was content that the Almighty fought impersonally on the side of the bigger guns; but Cromwell, convinced that his holier purpose came from God, could never be quite certain which of the two was the superior officer.

The sun was shining as we left York, but the weather had not changed its ugly nature. Heavy clouds were already answering a bugle from the west and mustering for a fiercer charge behind the Pennine Range. We were still short of Boroughbridge when the drum of thunder sounded, and a downpour drove us to a barn.

In the flash of lightning a dog crouched, frightened, in his kennel, then crept to us for company. And a cat slunk in, and several chickens clucked and fluttered into cover, until our band of refugees seemed complete. But a butcher's cart came next, and farmhands scampering from the fields. We were a crowded company for such patches of the roof as did not leak. For our shelter was a lean-to against a cow stable. A rain barrel filled briskly. The cows swished their placid tails.

Across the lane was a granary on stilts. I noticed that its corner stones were square and nicely chiseled, and too large for the weight they carried. Aldborough, once the Roman city of Isurium, lay but a mile or so across the fields; and these stones, I fancy, had been taken from its refuse. The material of progress, like Cæsar dead, crops up again in foreign use. I asked the butcher boy about these corner stones; but he had no customers among the diminished population of Aldborough, and knew nothing of them. He was rather scornful of our bicycles, for he himself owned a

motor cycle. His meat was for a customer in Little Ouseburn, and he fretted at the storm that was delaying dinner.

The rain held us up an hour, and then stopped just long enough to tempt us beyond Boroughbridge on the road to Ripon. Here we stood under what looked like a tree, but felt like a sponge. We were pulp when we pedaled into Ripon.

The cathedral tops the turn of the road just inside the town, but we hurried on to the Unicorn Hotel for better shelter. And here we were given a room and fire. We ordered lunch to be sent up and then, stripping off our clothing, we hung it at the hearth where presently it began to steam. A waitress fetched in a tray of food, which she arranged on a table behind the smoke barrage. And this hour of warmth and comfort rises like an island from a sea of troubles.

Cuthbert, when quite young, was a monk at Ripon, and there is a legend that he once warmed and comforted a stranger who had walked through the winter night. But when the stranger left, no mark was found upon the snow. And this was proof he was an angel sent to test the goodness of the monks. When we say that "we have entertained an angel unawares," the hackneyed phrase is proof of the legend's general use at many convents. It seems that heaven, like the Germans, has its secret service—angels that go about barefooted to test the generosity of saints. But the legend is evidence that the duty of hospitality lay on every monastery and that, in times when there were as yet no inns, they were the resort of travelers.

A curious custom persists in Ripon, practiced for these many hundred years, of blowing a horn nightly in the market place. Its brassy utterance is an angelus of more imperious voice and it calls at twilight men's thought of gain to meditation.

It was in early afternoon, under clouds that flirted with the sun, that we set out across the country to visit Fountains Abbey.

It stands in a vast estate of lakes and woodland through which the river Skell comes briskly from the moors of Dallowgill. From the outer gate a wide avenue mounts in easy slope through a long vista in the trees. And from this a lane drops to a lake of such beauty buried in the trees that the heart catches when it sees it first.

Until a pen is dipped in a jeweler's window and drips with emerald and sapphire, description must be a faded pretense. Artists through a thousand quarreling years fret themselves into little schools of imitation; yet silent water is the master, and the deft brushes of a woodland lake paint forever the changing color of the dawn and twilight.

Here is a gate for payment, and then a path runs along a wooded slope, past pools and water courses. One might think the Skell, which has traveled briskly in the narrow dale above, turned regretfully among these pools to see again its scene of careless haste.

It is a half mile to the valley's top, and there stands Fountains Abbey against a background of heavy woods.

Robin Hood seems to be the first person one meets in Fountains' history. For when there was as yet no

abbey, it was in this valley he met the curtal friar, a warlike fellow with good weapons and a bad temper.

> And coming into Fountains dale
> No further would he ride,
> There was he ware of the curtal friar
> Walking by the water's side.
>
> The friar had on a harnesse good,
> And on his head a cap of steel.
> Broad sword and buckler by his side,
> And they became him weel.

There is quite a bit of this, including a fight. It stood about even, so the friar joined Robin Hood's band and became famous in an English ballad.

History begins at Fountains in the year 1132, when thirteen Cistercian monks settled in this solitude—"a mere jungle of brambles," says the chronicler, "and so placed in the hollow of hills and overhanging rocks that it seemed more fit for the den of animals than for human use. . . . By night they rose for vigils, by day they set themselves to labour, some weaving mats, some cutting wood to build an oratory, some tilling garden plots. There was none who ate the bread of idleness, or took his ease till wearied out by toil. They came to meals when hungry, they lay down to sleep when tired; but of sadness or of murmuring there was not one sound, but every man blessed God with gladness."

The new convent was so remote, so endangered by famine and exposure, that several miracles are recited. The great Bernard, far away in southern France,

offered to recall the convent to an easier salvation. But Fountains persisted, to become in time an abbey famous through the world.

Bernard was born at Fontaine, and this Burgundian town may have been the origin of Fountains' name. Or the streams and springlets of the valley perhaps were its suggestion; for a spring is *fons*, and Latin was the language of the church.

Fountains' roof is the various vaulting of the sky. Its towers are fallen. The pavement is the flower-strewed turf. Vast windows, translucent once with painted sunlight, are the nests of birds; and shattered columns blossom with waving grass. But its ruined walls still trace the intricate design of multifarious life—choir, altar, refectory and cloister—a maze of buildings so wedged in the narrow valley that the River Skell is crowded from its former course and runs in a tunnel underneath.

To trace the daily life of a medieval abbey would be to chronicle a circumstance as various as the occupations of a town. For outside the service of the altar it maintained itself by as many crafts as any little city cut off from the world by muddy roads.

We were just in sight of Fountains, when a sudden squall drove us for leaky shelter to a ledge of overhanging rock that flanks the valley. Then, when the rain fell to an easy trickle, we advanced.

And now, behold a miracle, scarce in these humdrum days. We were beneath the abbey's walls when the clouds of a sudden parted, and all the vale was filled with yellow light.

Each blade of dripping grass, each leaf of a thousand trees, flashed in a dazzling radiance; as if the master of a pageant had drenched his stage in color. The valley wore a shimmering yellow garment washed in diamonds. Aladdin had rubbed a larger lamp in a mightier cave of jewels. And the loom of summer, now so long on strike, wove an azure carpet for the narrow corridor of sky that stretched above the abbey's towers.

No abbey in England cherishes a nobler legend of its start, or has endured poverty and wealth with greater honor. None of them is in such lovely setting of wood and stream and hill. Wall, windows, towers and broken footings have in their death found immortality.

At five o'clock we had high tea at Ripon in a shop upon the marketplace. A plate of cakes was laid before us. It is the British custom to count these at their entrance and their shriveled remnant at the end.

"Here goes another three-pence," said Collins, as he took his fifth.

The fine weather held, so I proposed that we ride on to such village farther north as might find us tired.

And magic followed us from Fountains, to give its beauty and its blessing to the road.

In a sunny garden of California

CHAPTER XXXV

WE RIDE IN GATHERING DUSK

. . . the twilight of such day
As after sunset fadeth in the west.

SIX long months have passed, and now in a sunny garden of California I write of England as my memory serves.

Acacias in yellow blossom, palms like larger pine-apples unplucked, rough-barked peppers with scarlet berry and pendent branch that wave in any hint of breeze, evergreens that celebrate their Christmas feast in warmth—these are my neighbors in the garden. Pansies nod along the path, gay awnings flaunt their color, and the distant roofs of Spanish houses are the painted canvas of the scene.

The wide Arroyo lies below and its more ambitious

tree tops are level with my eye. A ridge of hill and then a mountain range stand guard upon the north—mountains that are scarred with restless roads that clamber up from sunny land to feel the brisker wind above. February has but started on its course, yet the warm air offers me its breath of flowers and fruit, its song of birds. It is a garden for idle meditation, and if any glance shall leap the hedge it will sail through summer clouds.

But from this comfort my thoughts fly off to Yorkshire. June has outlived its lease upon the moorlands, October packed its bag. Winds now scamper on the Pennine Range and there is snow in every hollow. Candles burn in cottage windows, for daylight hardly lasts till tea. The night, in robe of ermine, is king of northern lands.

But my fancy jumps this winter mist, and sees two men of a summer long ago who turned their journey toward the border of the Scots.

And at first labor was coming from the fields to meet the supper's smoke at chimney tops. Soon it was the time of evening meal. Then men and children hung upon a fence, while pipes were lit and children played. The sun still lingered on the Pennine Range with backward glance, for it loves the English twilight and delays its schedule to the west.

Now candles glowed in lower windows, and still the cyclists pedaled on. A dog barked in a distant garden. Frogs croaked their discordant nocturne. A cock gave salutation to the night.

Candles now had climbed to bedroom casements to

The misty outline of the cathedral's mighty walls

be snuffed to sleep. A last bird flew across a golden sky, then night's dim fingers smudged the color into gray. The world, like a weary child, was wrapped in dreams, with stars for its comfort in the dark.

The moors of Yorkshire must be forever in my mind as in their beauty of this evening ride. Once we stopped for beer and cheese, and once we thought to turn aside to Richmond Castle and spend the night within the hills. But the infection of the peaceful hour was in our hearts. Each rising ground beckoned us to lands that lay beyond. Each hilltop was our invitation. In the thickening light a vast antiquity had swallowed up the world, and we were pioneers toward magic undiscovered.

It was near Durham that we came to this rolling country; and, if darkness be believed, a vast valley opened at our feet. A factory town slept beside the road, but there were houses in the distance with thriftless candles. Our way pelted up and down in haste, and above stood mining shafts like ghosts that walked upon the hills. And now at last on devious course, we saw the misty outline of the cathedral's mighty walls.

Five hours, fifty miles of afternoon and twilight, eighty miles this day, despite rain and the hours at Fountains Abbey. And this day was the peak of all our trip, to be etched on enduring tablet.

We found the Royal County Hotel, ate a plate of sandwiches, and went to bed. George was still abroad upon the town, in late session with his two old maids.

A doorway at Durham

CHAPTER XXXVI

DURHAM

Thy picture in my sight
Awakes my heart to heart's and eye's delight.

WE were quietly at pig next morning when George entered, and he was good enough to be amazed when he saw us. He paused at the door in the pose of Hamlet when he sees his father's ghost. This was what we wanted. The persuasion of our long ride had been the contemplation of his amaze-

ment and his praise of our endurance. We had staged the scene by dressing hurriedly to be at breakfast first.

George's profane phrase is all his own—a variant of Bob Acre's oath circumstantial.

"If it isn't little Jesus in a bright blue velvet jacket," he exclaimed.

But we silenced him. A lady at the next table had previously pointed out Cardinal Manning of New York, who sat beneath the window. He had delivered an address the day before at the Cathedral of York. George unchecked might have soured his bacon.

George had arrived on the preceding afternoon, had seen the cathedral and the castle—which he was prepared to review with us—had collected his daily sampler, and had sat throughout the evening with his old maids.

He advanced in the manner of Henry Irving, dragging a hind foot, sheltering his eyes from our ghostly glare.

"Unless this withered optic," he remarked, "is serving me a dirty trick, it's you."

All through breakfast we boasted of our eighty miles and our boyish appetite that could endure such punishment, then we sallied out to see the town.

Durham, although soiled in daylight by neighboring collieries, still sits in lordly dominance on the steep hills that rise from the river Wear. Business is centered in an open triangle not far from the bridge, and it pants up winding streets. All streets, as I recall, are on sharp pitch except those of cheaper buildings beside the water, and others that circle the hills with toes

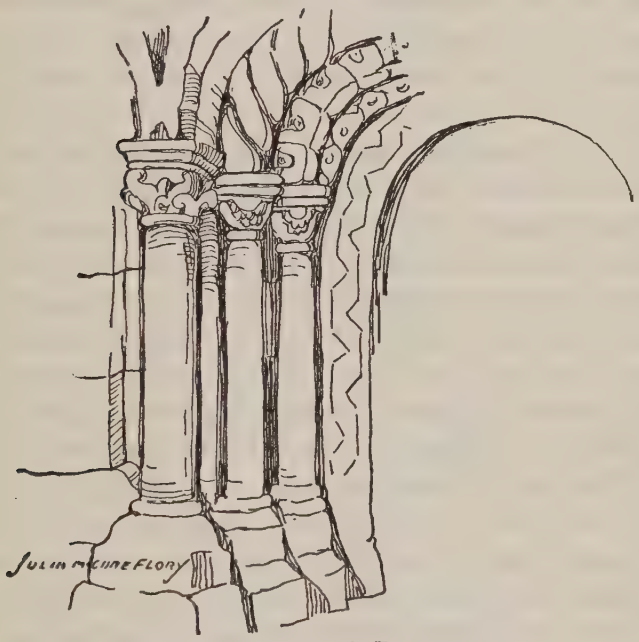
dug deep. The Wear sweeps in slow majesty around the cathedral and the castle's base.

The London and Northeastern Railroad can hardly be said to enter Durham. It goes across the city, as it were on stilts, and its bridge swings high above the river. The station is on a hilltop, just where the tracks jump through space toward Scotland; but to the eye of one who stands below, long legs stride the valley like a giant who hurries north in six-league boots. The highest level of Durham is even with the country roundabout, for the river cuts a monstrous gorge.

This difference of level must mark the grades of social living, for there are hovels along the river and the Bishop's palace sits on top. Durham is said to be the city of Walpole's novel, The Cathedral; and does he not contrast the river's degradation against the lordly hill? To the cathedral all visitors go first—"half church of God, half castle 'gainst the Scot." I bought a pretty photograph of Durham's tower in mist as we caught our breath halfway up the hill.

Durham, more than any church of England that I have seen, recalls William the Conqueror. It is first cousin to L'Abbaye aux Hommes in Caen; but built, with practice and from necessity, of larger space and heavier wall, as fitted his broader English duchy. L'Abbaye aux Hommes is considered to be the first full fruit of that style of architecture that we know as Norman, which is Romanesque touched with northern genius whose frontier school was the erection of castles. Norman is a soldier's Romanesque; for the Norman church was militant, and its race had arisen out of

pillage. It had been but a few centuries since these Norse Vikings had sailed into French rivers to check the power of Rome upon its border, and their manners had hardly settled into peace when their first churches had been built—a Latin structure with a northern scowl.



Norman is a soldier's Romanesque

Two streams of influence in these matters entered England from France, where medieval church design antedated the classics and chiefly flourished. The earliest of these, the Norman of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, was religion defiant that shook its fist at enemies. This arose when France was not yet a nation, but rather a group of quarreling duchies, and

churches took their fashion from the times and their necessities. Typical of this style is L'Abbaye aux Hommes and the building that crowns the peak of Mont Saint Michel—Saint Michael with a sword, the religion of defiant strength.

Then later there arose a softer spirit, quite as strong but of smaller muscle. In the thirteenth century France, it is true, was hardly yet a nation and there was wrangling still across its many borders. But another influence had come, as yet a formless eddy of the Renaissance—something that inspired Francis at Assisi and made Louis IX a saint. The strong Benedictines, against tradition, shared now their path to heaven with impoverished friars. Their books were but the equal of a staff and wallet. There was a newer message of spiritual humility. Softer winds had mingled with the north. And this newer spirit built Chartres and dedicated it not to a warrior, but to the Holy Mother. It was no longer St. Michael with a sword, but Mary offering her tears for the salvation and comfort of the world. Wherever we see in France or England the forms and spirit of the thirteenth century overlapped upon the Norman, it signifies that the earlier defiant strength has passed away, and that humility and softer virtues are reckoned in men's living.

Durham, built early in the Conquest and set far to the north, struggling always in wars that swung back and forth across the border of the Scots, is of the type of Mont Saint Michel. It has the beauty of strength, of massive wall and column. It stands upon a hill, with something of a castle's sullen air. In such a building

there could be no place for York's Five Sisters. Durham is masculine. It is the triumph of power. Its very shadows are of firmer outline. It is a church of defiant purpose, that might place cannon in its high embrasures.

I think that Durham must lie outside our American understanding. Our churches are frequented by women only, except where a tail coat shall pass the plate. Religion, like our shallow culture, is feminine—given to the sex that finds leisure for its service. Reading has fallen to our women's clubs, and the church is the society of knitting needles and female barrels for a missionary. We might understand Chartres and its altar to the Holy Mother, but how can we know a soldier's church. Protestantism, that started with virility, sings now a treble hymn.

I passed lately a church that is building in the parkway near my home. I noticed that the window to the east is of tracery soft as lace. It seemed a bit of drawn linen that a woman might fasten to her shoulders. This is the heritage of Chartres. But it is Durham that our lukewarm spirit needs.

An American and his wife went through the cathedral with us. It was their first trip abroad and their first church. They were delightfully ignorant, and to them a nave was nothing but a rascal, a choir was a group of young men and women who sang hymns. For an hour with shallow knowledge I seemed an expert.

In the castle it was George's turn. With lesson learned, he waived aside the guide.

Yet his patter was but revenge for the hours he had endured my instructive finger.

Labor out of work sat idly on the curb

CHAPTER XXXVII

IN WHICH A WEARY READER DRAWS NEAR THE END

For saying so there's gold.

WE left Durham after lunch, squeaking our brakes down hill. Then the bridge and a long walk upward to the plains above the gorge. George was to travel next day to Edinburgh, and we set the station hotel as our place of meeting.

Durham lies in a district of collieries and manufacture. On our approach from the south we had passed through Darlington and North Ollerton; but their monotony had been softened in the evening light. It was at Darlington that a man on horseback had trotted

ahead of Stephenson's first locomotive to warn people from the track.

But north of Durham, in the harsher light of afternoon, all the way to Newcastle, we passed towns so closely set that a dozen miles together were suburban. Chester-le-Street is of Roman origin with suggestion of the Norman Conquest. Here St. Cuthbert's body rested on its journey to Durham for interment.

And Newcastle was next, sprawling for many miles among unpainted houses, where dirty children were running in the streets and labor out of work sat idly on the curb. It stands at the eastern end of Hadrian's Wall, with Wallend near-by down the river. In Scottish border days it was a new castle of defense, but is now England's chief port for coal. And it builds ships as a rival to the Clyde.

We pedaled under a heavy railway line, across a long bridge that served for trains and city traffic, and came out on what appeared to be a better quarter of shops and hotels. The most casual glance showed the stagnation of trade. Men stood listless and apathetic, awaiting a job that never came. All the way from Alnswick on the west to the North Sea, nine miles along the river, is a swarm of industrial towns, for this is one of England's largest centers of production.

And to a man who has traveled largely in the south and west, this is a good corrective; for otherwise he might think that Barchester lingered everywhere with climbing roses on the wall. But this is a mining country—

of ragged clothing, of unlovely villages, of smoke. In good times it is a source of wealth, in bad the penalty of unemployment. It is England's greatest problem. For coal has been the basis of prosperity since the days of steam. Coal has supplied her furnaces and loaded her outward-going ships, and without a cheapness that can thrive in competition her foreign commerce is swept away. It is not Barchester that built the Empire, but these rude cities of the north.

And now the seams of coal are deep, and the Ruhr can cut the price. The Wall of Hadrian is forgotten and all the border warfare, yet the north now fights a fiercer conflict.

Newcastle does not delight the eye. In the recently published letters of Maurice Hewlett, I ran on this: "This morning," he wrote, "I went for a walk about the greasy streets: all the same, the view of chimneys and smoke and dirty water from the Tyne Bridge is not without points. Two poor old black churches and a shabby castle look scared—as if they were wondering still where on earth they were." Hewlett was writing the Song of Renny at the station hotel, proving how romance may rise above its circumstance. Talent frets always in a cage, but genius sees its stars in daylight.

I had hoped to detour from Newcastle along the Roman wall, but the weather threatened.

We cycled through the afternoon until we had left coal and soot behind. It was Alnwick at which we aimed, but yesterday's long ride had tired us.

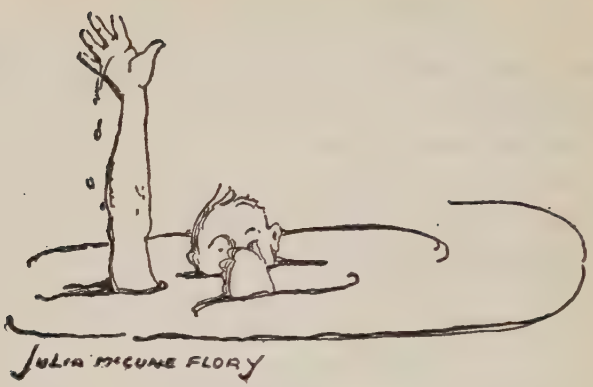
There is a busy little street in Morpeth, and on it a

hotel. A few raindrops fell and clouds were gathering, so we took a room and unpacked.

"What do you think of the weather," I asked the maid.

"It's na sae good," she answered.

Our trip had ended.



We sink for the third time

CHAPTER XXXVIII

WE SINK FOR THE THIRD TIME

Little wanton boys that swim on bladders.

AGAIN there was incessant downpour in the morning. And something, too, of Scotland had been added, for we were upon the border—a mistier muck of a disposition that would be stubborn in persistence. If old John Knox could be expressed in terms of weather, that was the kind of day it was. He must have looked like rainy Morpeth when he scolded the Queen of Scots.

I have been at Loches and Chillon, yet I recall no dungeon as dull as our hotel's reading room and lounge. I cannot remember that it had even a window, but there may have been a narrow hole that opened on the stable yard. Nor did we have a jolly turnkey to fetch us gruel. Piled on the table was the usual assortment of old catalogues and periodicals. Most of their covers

were torn away, as if a sudden madness bred of rain had seized a former reader.

For an hour we read these papers, finding little comfort in the advertisements or in the year-old jaunts of royalty. Nor was there solace in the pictures of Queen Mary in Seventh Avenue hats. Then we glanced out doors. But the courtyard splashed with rain, and gloomy cats sat about on wisps of straw and looked as if they had lost their kittens.

We studied English art in the tap and on the stairway, but whisky's red coats mocked us. We stood about while a chauffeur washed a motor. We deciphered washroom verses on the whitewash. Then we went back to Queen Mary's turbans.

Collins looked as in decline, for he had slumped down in a leather chair. His legs were outstretched and his feet rested on the table. Did he think it a shelf that, with employment gone forever, hopelessly he laid them there? His béret, which had looked so natty in happier days, was pulled across his eyes to exclude the ugly world.

"Is it nearly night" he asked, when he awoke.

"It is only ten o'clock," I answered.

"And when do they hang us?" he asked.

"Explain," I answered.

"It seems like the hideous day before an execution."

Nor in my heart could I find him comfort.

I stood at the mouth of the stable lane and watched the patter in the street, inspected the clouds and found no hope. I meditated whether I, too, might add verses to the whitewash.

"Pussy, pussy," I said, but the melancholy matron would not budge from her wisp of straw.

Does time really gallop to the gallows? The death cap had slipped to Collins' nose.

It must have been a month later, as dullness counts the time, that I met a native in the corridor. He was a pleasant red-faced Scotsman.

"And will ye have a nip?" he asked.

Students will remember how Orlando, starving in Arden, begged a minute to fetch his old companion to the feast. In Morpeth my own nobility was no less.

"I have a comrade in the lounge," I answered, "quite nigh to death and, unless he has cut his throat in these last few minutes, perhaps he will join us."

I went to the door.

"Collins," I called, "here is a gentleman who invites us to have a drink."

One miracle we saw at Fountains when the clouds broke to yellow light. And the second and the last was at Morpeth.

Collins raised his feeble head. One languid eye slipped out from beneath the béret. "I don't think," he said, and his head fell back upon his shoulder, "I don't think that I care for a drink."

Rain fell in steady torrent. The cats sought drier wisps. John Knox was lashing sinners.

"Collins," I said, "it's a long way to John o' Groat's."

He groaned.

"It's all the length of Scotland," I persisted, "through the Trossachs and the farther highlands. And what's

more, Collins, I think it's raining on that last cliff that overlooks the Arctic Sea."

Collins muttered incoherently with feeble breath.

I left him in a coma. My own nose upon the window was not flatter than my despair.

Then an idea blossomed in what were once the furrows of my brain.

I was roused to action.

In short, I inquired of boots if there was a bus to Berwick.

But he shook his head.

Or a train?

There was one in half an hour.

I reëntered the death chamber.

"A sail! A sail!" I called. And I lifted Collins from his chair.

"We're done," I cried. "Done! There is a train."

No lotion ever wrought such sudden cure.

Collins jumped up with youth restored. His abandoned legs were lifted from their shelf. Once more his béret flirted above his ears.

We ran to the stable. We pedaled to the station in the rain. We waited on the platform among penny gum machines and the sodden pulp of Sunny Days in Scotland.

There was a far-off toot, and the engine of God's mercy stopped.

Nor did we alight at Berwick. Not for the Roman Colosseum would we have left our easy cushions. At most we pressed our happy noses on the rain-splashed glass. Once we saw a cyclist pedaling through the

mist, and we booed at him. With a song we sped to Edinburgh.

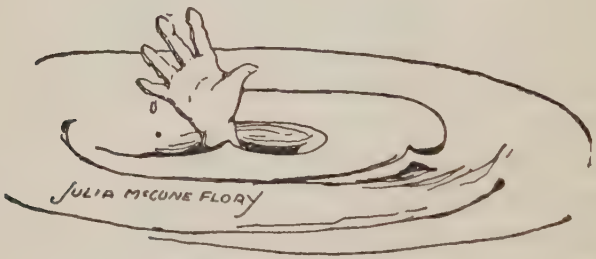
Gone was our vision of the Highlands and of John o' Groat's. Gone was the top of our whirling earth where man may look through space upon the northern stars.

We met George, saw Edinburgh through four days of incessant downpour, char-à-banced to Tantalon which was curtained in mist, declined drowning at Abbotsford and pneumonia at Melrose, then sold our bicycles and embarked for London.

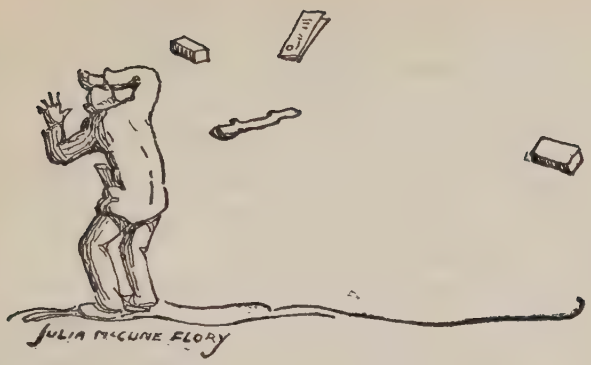
My cyclometer stood at four hundred and twenty miles.

There should be a moral in every book. Mine is red flannels, overshoes and an umbrella.

Let's hold our nose and sink!



Let's hold our nose and sink



The perils of an author

CHAPTER XXXIX

THE PERILS OF AN AUTHOR

O! for a stone-bow, to hit him in the eye.

COLLINS knows I am a liar, but he waives the right to sue for damages. Actors, I suppose, train themselves to abuse and hissing.

And last night, giving George a pretty dinner to shatter his judgment and reinforce his charity, I put him in an easy-chair and handed him this journal. I lighted a fire. I patted pillows for his back. I called him Old Top and other endearing epithets. I put the Pathétique on the Victrola so that pity and mercy might float upon the air.

He read for several hours, tossing off the manuscript sheet by sheet until a clutter lay about the floor. I studied his face to learn whether my foul report stirred anger, whether revenge already seethed in the hot channels of his brain.

Once in a while he sniffed, with what I hoped might

be a sense of humor. Otherwise his face was as impassive as of a man who holds a line of kings.

"Well," I said, when he had finished.

"You're a hound," he answered.

"Of course," I replied.

"And you haven't stuck to fact."

"That would be stupid," I answered.

"I didn't slink off for samplers like a surly cat. I was never boosted up the stairs to bed. I didn't send post cards from a list compiled out of the ledger."

"Of course not," I replied.

"And I'm not the ass that you describe."

"Granted, George. You're drama. Shakespeare took liberties with Hamlet. I don't suppose that Othello really strangled Desdemona, but the play required it. At least I've kept you out of murder."

"So far," said George, and his hard eye sought me with this new suggestion. He lifted a poker from the hearth, but it was merely to stir the coal.

I soothed his pillow, and he returned to his easy chair.

"Another Scotch?" I asked.

"The best things you have given me, I really said," he continued, "but you have added rot of your own blithering invention."

"True," I acknowledged.

"It was bass I sang in the Ashby bathtub."

"Not a doubt of it," I answered.

"And I didn't hold a pillow for a fig leaf."

"Shame on you, George."

For a moment he sat in thought.

"I don't know," he said at length, "what several

ladies will think of your raw remarks on widows. There may be a shrinkage of sales."

"No woman," I answered, "can persist to the end of marriage without a sense of humor. They will know how harmless is my bark."

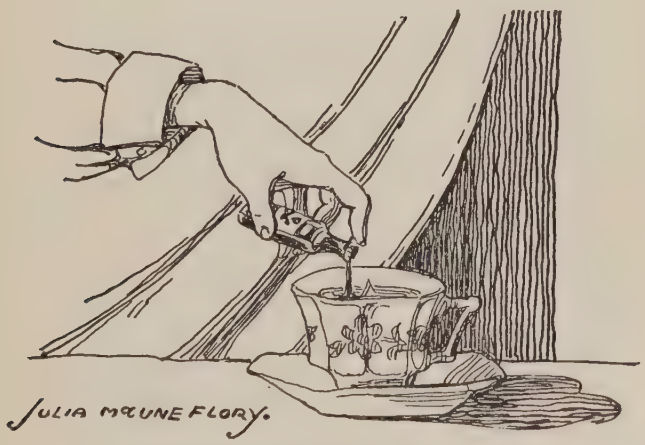
I paused.

The belated wind of April murmured in the chimney. The Largo pled for mercy from the corner of the room.

"Veronica?" presently I asked. "Is she easily offended? If some day I come to breakfast, will she drop a lump of poison in my coffee?"

"Ah," said George. "Come around next Sunday morning, and you'll find out."

And so a date is set for griddlecakes and danger.



A date is set for griddlecakes and danger